

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Assessing DHS's Performance: Watchdog  
Recommendations to Improve Homeland Security***

February 26, 2015 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency hearing entitled “Assessing DHS’s Performance: Watchdog Recommendations to Improve Homeland Security”:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for holding the Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency’s first hearing of the 114th Congress. I look forward to seeing this Subcommittee, with you and Ranking Member Watson Coleman at the helm, conduct vigilant and bipartisan oversight of the Department of Homeland Security.

I would also like to thank the panel of witnesses for appearing today. I look forward to hearing from each of you about your recommendations for how the Department of Homeland Security can become more efficient and effective in its mission of securing the homeland.

Unfortunately, as we meet today to discuss recommendations for DHS, Republicans in the House continue to put partisan politics and pandering to their fringe ahead of funding the Department responsible for keeping the homeland secure.

They are doing so at a time of increased security concerns both at home and abroad. This week, rather than focusing on implementing recommendations issued by GAO and the Inspector General, among their other important duties, DHS employees are being forced to prepare for furloughs and the stress that accompanies working without knowing when your next paycheck may come. With that in mind, I have a recommendation for my Republican colleagues regarding homeland security – fully fund the Department without strings attached so that DHS and its dedicated employees can focus on their mission.

Regrettably, damage has already been done by the Republican brinksmanship regarding funding for DHS. As Dr. Gerstein points out in his written testimony, even just the specter of a lapse in funding for the Department of Homeland Security has costs and is a significant distraction.

While I remain hopeful that my Republican colleagues will recognize the error of their ways on this issue, any confidence I had in their ability to govern responsibly has been further eroded. Turning to recommendations for DHS, I look forward to hearing from Inspector General Roth regarding his new initiative for verification reviews to ensure recommendations are fully implemented by the Department and that the actions taken had the intended effect.

While we are pleased when DHS concurs with a recommendation, the real benefit is found in the implementation, not the mere acknowledgement that there is a problem. I am also eager to hear from the Inspector General regarding his concerns with the Transportation Security Administration’s use, and what he believes to be misuse, of the Sensitive Security Information designation.

Regarding TSA, I have questions for Ms. Gambler of GAO about the agency’s expedited passenger screening program and continued use of behavior detection as a method for screening passengers.

Given Dr. Gerstein's time in senior positions within DHS, I look forward to hearing his insider's perspective on how he believes the Department can become more effective and efficient.

Before yielding back, I would like to acknowledge the good work of Stephen Caldwell who recently retired after more than 30 years of service with GAO. His work on security issues was invaluable to both this Committee and the Department of Homeland Security."

# # #

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Adam Comis at (202) 225-9978

**United States House of Representatives**  
Committee on Homeland Security  
H2-117, Ford House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515  
Phone: (202) 226-2616 | Fax: (202) 226-4499  
<http://chsdemocrats.house.gov>