

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson
Full Committee Markup**

February 2, 2016 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the full Committee markup:

“We all have an interest in seeing DHS’ hand strengthened when it comes addressing the complex and consequential challenges posed by terrorist and foreign fighter travel, human trafficking, and acquisitions. At the outset, I want to commend the members of the Committee’s task force on “Combatting Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel”. They delivered a report that sets forth a roadmap for improving our ability to prevent terrorists and individuals who have battlefield experience from Syria or Iraq from traveling to the U.S. and carrying out attacks.

This bipartisan group, led by Representatives Katko and Sanchez, took on the painstaking process of identifying actions that could be taken by DHS and across the Federal government. I want to express my appreciation for the efforts of the Democratic members of the taskforce— Representatives Sanchez, Vela, and Payne. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of Nicole Tisdale, on my staff, to this bipartisan effort. I am pleased that today we will be considering six measures that flow from the taskforce’s recommendations with respect to this multi-dimensional, multi-faceted, homeland security challenge.

I am also pleased that the Committee will be considering timely legislation that Representative Sanchez introduced with Representative McSally to bolster the effectiveness of the Department’s BLUE CAMPAIGN against human smuggling. On the issue of human smuggling, in particular, Representative Sanchez is a leader on this panel. Her commonsense bill seeks to break down the silos within DHS that undermine its ability to identify and investigate human smuggling rings. January was “Human Trafficking Awareness Month,” an opportunity to redouble our efforts to identify and prevent these crimes. Enactment of H.R. 4383, the “Human Trafficking Prevention Act of 2016”, is in the spirit of such efforts and holds the promise of saving lives.

The final bill that I would like to highlight today was introduced by the Representative Watson Coleman. The “DHS Acquisition Documentation Integrity Act of 2016” seeks to ensure that the fundamentals are in place at DHS when it comes to acquisition documentation. The maintenance of accurate and timely information about cost estimates and schedules is no minor matter, particularly for major acquisition programs, those programs with life-cycle cost estimates of \$300 million or greater.

Yet, DHS has a checkered record when it comes to holding its components’ feet to the fire. Ms. Watson Coleman’s legislation, which was incorporated into H.R. 3572 - the DHS headquarters bill - would codify components’ responsibilities with respect to collecting and maintaining acquisition documentation and sets a high bar for when such requirements may be waived. This legislation is timely and important, particularly with DHS operating at sequester budget levels. Every dollar wasted on a runaway program is a dollar that could have gone to secure the homeland.”

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