

## **Opening Statement of Ranking Member Donald Payne Jr. (D-NJ)**

### **Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications**

#### **Markup of: H.R. 5346, H.R. 5459, H.R. 5460**

**June 16, 2016**

The Orlando tragedy is a critical reminder that equipping our first responders with the tools necessary to do their jobs is an American priority. Accordingly, I am pleased that we are marking up H.R. 5460, the First Responder Access to Innovative Technologies Act. As the threats that first responders have to tackle continue to evolve, it is critical that they have the equipment necessary to respond.

The private sector is working to rapidly develop and move to market the latest first responder technologies. Many first responders, however, are not able to acquire advanced equipment because they are not able to use their Homeland Security Grant Program funds to purchase it.

Under current law, equipment purchased with Homeland Security Grant Program funding is required to meet or exceed national voluntary consensus standards. Although FEMA does review grantee requests to purchase equipment that does not meet consensus standards, stakeholders have complained that the process lacks uniformity, predictability, and transparency.

Moreover, there is no process to review requests to purchase equipment for which no consensus standards exist. Unfortunately, the process for developing voluntary consensus standards for first responder equipment is slow and has not kept pace with the evolution of technology or the demands of first responders.

H.R. 5460 will help equip first responders with the tools needed to do their jobs better and safer by requiring FEMA to establish a clear, transparent process to review requests to purchase innovative technologies with grant funds. I would like to thank Chairman Donovan for his partnership on this measure. I would also like to thank the Security Industry Association for its support of H.R. 5460.

I am pleased that the Subcommittee is considering H.R. 5459, the Cyber Preparedness Act of 2016, legislation introduced by Chairman Donovan, which I was pleased to cosponsor. H.R. 5459 responds to deficiencies in cyber threat information-sharing identified through this Subcommittee's oversight activities.

It seeks to bolster the dissemination of homeland security information related to cyber threats by creating a mechanism for DHS' National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center to share information with State and major urban area fusion centers.

Finally, I would like to thank Representative Young for introducing H.R. 5346, the Securing our Agriculture and Food Act. H.R. 5346 clarifies the role of the Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs with respect to DHS' responsibilities for food, agriculture, and veterinary defense.

This legislation charges the Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs with managing and overseeing the Department's duties under HSPD-9, coordinating with appropriate Federal agencies in this mission space, and leading DHS' policy initiatives on food, animal, and agriculture incidents.