

**Hearing Statement for Chairman Joseph Lieberman
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
Nomination of Tara O'Toole – DHS Undersecretary of Science and Technology
Washington, DC
June 10, 2009**

Good morning. Today this Committee will consider the nominations of Dr. Tara O'Toole to be Undersecretary of Science and Technology at the Department of Homeland Security and Jeffrey Zients to be the Director for Management at the Office of Management and Budget.

We will begin with Dr. O'Toole, who has appeared previously before our Committee as a witness and who I'm delighted to welcome back as the nominee for this important position.

The Science and Technology Directorate is charged with managing our nation's investments in homeland security research and development projects.

It is hard to think of a threat to America's homeland security that cannot be better defended against with an innovative application of science and technology.

S&T had a difficult launch and in its early years struggled to clarify and execute its primary mission. As a result, the FY 2007 Appropriations Act reduced the Directorate's \$1.4 billion budget by 40 percent.

In wake of this dose of tough-love, former Undersecretary Cohen resolved to build a leaner and more tightly-managed organization that focused on serving its primary customers – DHS agencies – and being transparent with Congress.

Undersecretary Cohen implemented internal controls to monitor S&T finances and track the progress of S&T investments. He established a structured strategic planning process that is designed to produce specific objectives and annual performance measures.

In my view, the recent increases in the Directorate's budget indicates that S&T's career staff has succeeded in regaining the trust of the oversight and appropriations committees in the House and Senate.

But a number of complex challenges remain, and we would look to you, Dr. O'Toole, for the leadership to continue to build and improve this agency that is vital to DHS's overall mission to protect our homeland.

These challenges include expanding investments in innovative R&D for homeland security and insuring the reliability of the testing and evaluation that DHS relies on for large acquisition programs.

You also must strengthen relationships between S&T and agencies within DHS. Dr. O'Toole brings a wealth of experience that will serve her well in this new job.

After practicing medicine in Baltimore for several years, Dr. O'Toole earned a Masters of Public Health from Johns Hopkins University, spent five-years as a senior analyst and project director with the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment and, from 1993 to 1997, served as the Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health at the Department of Energy.

From 1999 to 2003, she managed the Johns Hopkins Center for Civilian Biodefense Strategies. For the last six years, she has served as the Director and Chief Executive Office of the Center for Biosecurity at the University of Pittsburgh.

Today she is best known as a nationally recognized expert on biodefense and the actions what we must take to detect, deter and react to either a biological terrorist attack or a ruinous pandemic.

An important measure of her fitness for this post is the respect she has garnered in the scientific community and across the U. S. Government.

A former chair of the board of the American Federation of American Scientist, she has participated in major studies or advisory panels at the request of the National Science Foundation, the Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Homeland Security.

I believe her nomination is an inspired choice.

Sen. Collins.

**Hearing Statement for Chairman Joseph Lieberman
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Nomination of Jeffrey Zients, Deputy Director OMB
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And now we will consider President Obama's nomination of Jeffrey Zients to be deputy director for the Office of Management and Budget.

Since its creation, a common criticism of OMB is that its leadership, no matter what party is in charge, too often has focused on the "B" at the expense of the "M" – on budget as opposed to management. That should not be the case. The two go hand in hand and if a program is not doing well with the "M", it is likely to have problems with the "B" as well and that means the taxpayers are not getting their money's worth.

I'm pleased that President Obama has made the drive toward management excellence a top priority across the government and has stated that the Deputy Director for Management at OMB will also serve as the first "Chief Performance Officer" of the federal government.

Mr. Zients will have oversight of four statutory offices with far-reaching mandates: The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs; the Office of Federal Procurement Policy; the Office of E-Government and Information Technology; and the Office of Federal Financial Management.

I would like to take a moment to outline just a few of the challenges I believe Mr. Zients will face if confirmed.

In the area of performance metrics, the ratings system created by the previous administration – the Program Assessment Rating Tool, or PART – was viewed skeptically by many as a biased system that generated poor ratings for programs that the Administration wanted to eliminate for ideological reasons.

I hope, Mr. Zients, that you can help create objective performance rating metrics for programs, and one that takes into account that a “one-size-fits-all” approach is inappropriate given the diversity of government programs.

Improving contracting practices is another priority for the President, and rightfully so, as total spending on goods and services has skyrocketed from \$189 billion in 1999 to \$532 billion in 2008.

Another concern is properly managing the Information Technology investments of the Federal government – estimated to be over \$70 billion in this fiscal year. We must be assured these funds are spent effectively while also meeting the President’s goals of using technology to make the government more transparent, participatory, and collaborative.

In a related concern, OMB will continue to play a key role – along with DHS – in protecting our federal networks against the malicious actors that seek to do us harm. In recent years this has been a real challenge.

And finally, I’d like to mention how important transparency initiatives can be to improving accountability in government programs. President Obama is passionate about this issue as well.

But many current efforts to provide data to the public on federal spending, including USAspending.gov, have fallen short of original expectations and now the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board is grappling with how to provide the public comprehensive information on stimulus spending.

I'm optimistic that, with strong leadership, we'll be able to solve these problems so the public can track spending and provide their own oversight if they spot wasteful spending.

Mr. Zients has 20 years of business experience as a CEO, management consultant, and entrepreneur. He has served as CEO and Chairman of The Advisory Board Company and as Chairman of the Corporate Executive Board – two firms that are leading providers of performance benchmarking and best practices across a wide range of industries. He has spent most of his career devising ways to improve governance, organization, management, efficiencies, financial systems of companies, and now we will look to him to bring those best practices to government agencies.

So again, welcome Mr. Zients. I look forward to your statement and your answers to our questions.

Sen. Collins.