

Statement of
Senator Susan M. Collins

Nomination of Tara O'Toole to be
Under Secretary for Science and Technology, DHS

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
June 10, 2009

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I join the Chairman in welcoming Tara O'Toole, the nominee to head the Science and Technology Directorate at the Department of Homeland Security.

Dr. O'Toole has had an extensive medical, public health, and biodefense career and currently serves as CEO and director of the Center for Biosecurity at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and as a professor of medicine and of public health at the University of Pittsburgh. She was one of the original members of the Johns Hopkins Center for Civilian

Biodefense Strategies and served as its director from 2001 to 2003.

When the Department of Homeland Security was established, Congress recognized the important role that technology must play in securing our nation and created a Science and Technology Directorate to undertake research and development activities. Today, the Department is developing technologies on a variety of fronts, including biological, chemical and explosives detection, communications interoperability, and passenger and cargo screening.

Technological advances at the ports of entry are already helping to identify people using fraudulent travel documents. This technology allows the Department to better perform its mission of protecting the American people while still facilitating the legitimate flow of people

and commerce – letting our friends in, while keeping our enemies out.

The Department’s relationship with the University of Maine and other research universities is helping to improve our homeland security. An example of the great promise of advanced technology is the composite-material cargo- container prototype under development at the University of Maine. A composite shipping container with embedded sensors could improve the security and integrity of the supply chain while offering shippers a lighter and longer- lasting alternative to traditional steel containers.

Research and development of new technologies at the Department carry an annual multi- billion dollar price tag. To ensure that these dollars are spent wisely, the Science and Technology Directorate must rigorously test

and evaluate technologies before procurement decisions are made. Better engagement by the Directorate's testing and evaluation office in Department acquisition programs could help avoid problems such as those experienced in the troubled SBInet program.

The next Under Secretary for Science and Technology will also need to align DHS research and development priorities with the greatest security vulnerabilities that our nation faces and ensure close coordination with DHS operational components and other federal, state, and local partners. I look forward to hearing how Dr. O'Toole would address these challenges if confirmed.

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Nomination of Jeffrey Zients to be Deputy Director for
Management at the Office of Management and Budget

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
June 10, 2009



For our second panel, the Committee welcomes Jeffrey Zients, President Obama's nominee to serve as the next Deputy Director for Management at the Office of Management and Budget. If confirmed, Mr. Zients will also serve as the government's first Chief Performance Officer.

Although OMB is better known for its budget responsibilities, it has a two-pronged mission. In addition to overseeing the preparation and implementation of the federal budget, OMB oversees federal procurement, financial management, information

technology, and regulatory policies across the executive branch.

The management challenges that OMB faces are extremely important. Effective management can help to ensure that agencies are carrying out their responsibilities in the most cost-effective manner. Good management can save tax dollars and lead to better results.

A major OMB responsibility is the oversight of approximately \$71 billion in spending on information technology investments. It is unacceptable that federal agencies have identified approximately 450 IT projects, totaling more than \$26 billion for fiscal year 2009, as poorly planned, poorly performing, or both.

Senator Carper and I have introduced a bill, which this Committee reported favorably, that would improve agency performance and oversight of federal IT projects.

I look forward to hearing how Mr. Zients would work to prevent future cost, schedule, and performance problems.

I also look forward to hearing Mr. Zients's views on how OMB can continue to provide effective oversight and implementation of Recovery Act spending.

Mr. Zients comes before the Committee with twenty years of business experience as a CEO, management consultant, and entrepreneur. He will need to call on all this experience if he is to serve effectively as the Deputy Director for OMB and Chief Performance Officer.

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