

**Opening Statement of Ranking Member Thomas R. Carper:
“HSGAC Organizational Business Meeting for the 114th Congress”
January 22, 2015**

As prepared for delivery:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would first like to congratulate you on your Chairmanship. I know you are just as eager as I am to get started on our agenda for the 114th Congress. I am very much looking forward to partnering with you. I would also like to welcome our new Committee members. To Senators Booker, Peters, Lankford, Ernst and Sasse – welcome. I am pleased you are all joining us and am excited to work closely with each of you. To our returning members, welcome back. I look forward to continuing our hard work from last Congress.

This committee has a long history of bipartisanship. Over the course of a decade, Senators Joe Lieberman and Susan Collins – both serving as Chairman and Ranking Member – forged a strong and successful bipartisan working relationship. In doing so, they set an example not just for those of us on this Committee, but really for all of our Committees to follow. Last Congress, Dr. Coburn and I locked arms and continued that proud tradition. While we didn’t agree on everything, we always searched for compromise. I believe we achieved real results. Together, our Committee succeeded in getting 21 bills signed into law, and that’s not counting postal naming bills. Those bills include four critically important cybersecurity bills, a bill to reauthorize the chemical facility security program at the Department of Homeland Security, and bills to improve government transparency and information technology management.

We also did our part to eliminate what I call “Executive Branch Swiss Cheese,” by considering nominations in a timely but thorough manner. Our Committee had 29 nominees confirmed by the Senate. Twelve additional nominees were reported out of Committee but we ultimately ran out of time before the Senate could take action. If we want to build on this progress and achieve major accomplishments in the 114th Congress, we have to sustain our strong bipartisan work.

I have several key priorities for the 114th Congress. At the top of the list is to build on the important cybersecurity work we did last Congress by taking up information-sharing legislation. We also need to improve our nation’s border security by focusing on the root causes that led to the unprecedented surge in migration from Central America that we saw last year.

I also plan to continue to work to address the financial challenges facing the Postal Service, and working with the Postal Service to give it the tools it needs to adapt to and succeed in the Digital Age. Those tools include a working Board of Governors. We need to move quickly to fill the vacancies on that body as soon as we get the nominations back that the Senate was unable to confirm last year.

And of course, I want to continue this Committee’s work on curbing waste, fraud, and abuse throughout our federal government and programs. One of my focuses throughout my tenure on this committee has been to find ways to get better results for less money in everything we do. That will continue to be an area of focus for me, and I believe for a number of my colleagues as well. The ability to do this important bipartisan work is one of the reasons I first joined this

Committee 14 years ago, and also one of the reasons I look forward to our work here every year whether I'm part of the majority or minority.

Finally, I'd like to note that, in addition to our Committee's broad jurisdiction over government operations and homeland security, we're also responsible for legislative matters and some nominations concerning the District of Columbia. It's important to me that we take this responsibility very seriously and treat the District and its over 600,000 residents fairly.

The District of Columbia has too often suffered as a result of misbehavior on the part of Congress, or the failure by Congress to do its job. For example, the District briefly lost its ability to spend its own locally-raised funds during the most recent government shutdown. And while this Committee moved quickly to consider and approve two candidates for the D.C. Superior Court those nominees languished for months in part as a result over the fight between our two parties over the nominations process. We need to do better this Congress, including by giving the District the legislative and budget autonomy it has sought for years now and that Senator Mark Begich and others sought to give it during the last Congress.

I commit to continuing this Committee's important tradition of bipartisanship and cooperation on these matters and more. I look forward to working with you, Mr. Chairman, as we help lead this Committee for the next two years. I'm confident that we if we continue the example set by Senators Lieberman and Collins, we can be just as successful -- and hopefully even more successful -- in this Congress as we were in past Congresses.

I am pleased that we were able to start on a good note by working together to agree to the set of proposed rules changes before us today. I am also pleased we were able to move the important nominees on our agenda today, which were among those this Committee approved last year but which the Senate was unable to confirm. I think we're off to a great start.