

Statement of Ranking Member Thomas R. Carper

“Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Business Meeting”
June 24, 2015

As prepared for delivery:

I'd like to start today's markup by thanking Chairman Johnson for holding this business meeting today. As we all know, there are three nominees and a number of important bills on the agenda before us so I'd like to thank our colleagues and all of our staffs for the hard work that went into preparing us for what I believe will be a successful mark up.

Among the bills we'll be considering today is the Saving Federal Dollars Through Better Use of Government Purchase and Travel Cards Act of 2015. I am pleased to sponsor this legislation, along with Senators Grassley, Johnson and McCaskill.

Government charge cards are a necessary and useful tool for federal employees to use to pay for official expenses when they travel or purchase small items for government use. But we need to be vigilant in making sure they are not abused. For example, the Department of Defense Inspector General recently identified instances of government charge cards being used improperly at casinos and for adult entertainment. This common-sense measure will ensure that charges against government cards are analyzed in order to identify improper use and, thus, help agencies to be better stewards of taxpayer dollars.

I am also eager for our Committee to discuss the nomination of Carol Ochoa to be Inspector General for the General Service Administration. As we discussed at our hearing on IG vacancies earlier in the month, the nomination process is a two-part process. The President nominates and the Senate confirms. I'm pleased that our Committee has worked together in a bipartisan manner to move Ms. Ochoa's nomination forward promptly. And I will continue to work with the Chairman to see that other IG vacancies are also filled.

In addition to Ms. Ochoa, today we consider two nominees to be Associate Judges on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Both Judge Nooter and Judge Wellner were originally nominated back in 2013. My hope is that we can act today to report out these qualified nominees and then move them quickly out of the Senate. They have waited far too long.

I am also pleased that today's agenda reflects the good, bipartisan work that our Committee members are known for doing to make government work better. For example, we will consider legislation offered by Senators Ernst and Heitkamp to help improve the management of programs across the federal government.

And we will also consider a bill put forth by Senators Tester, Portman, Heitkamp and Enzi that will allow agencies to share lists of qualified candidates with each other when they are hiring to fill similar positions. So let me thank our Committee's members for their continued commitment to finding bipartisan solutions to specific problems that we face in the federal government.

Before I close, I do want to mention one bill that Chairman Johnson and I have agreed to postpone until the next business meeting. This bill would codify an existing cybersecurity program at the Department of Homeland Security commonly known as EINSTEIN. EINSTEIN

analyzes internet traffic entering and leaving federal civilian agencies to identify cyber threats and prevent attacks on agency networks. It is a critically important program given the seemingly never ending cyber attacks on our federal government.

I want to thank Chairman Johnson and all my colleagues for working with me on this very important bill. We still have a little more work to do to on this legislation. I appreciate all the valuable input my colleagues have provided, especially Senators Paul and McCain. In looking at the amendments filed, there are some clear areas of agreement and some areas where some additional time should help us reach consensus. I look forward to passing a strong bipartisan bill in July.

Given the agenda we have before us, I will refrain from any additional remarks so we can start right into the business at hand and get to work.

###