

Statement of Ranking Member Thomas R. Carper

*“U.S Senate Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Business Meeting”*

July 29, 2015

As prepared for delivery:

I'd like to start today's markup by thanking Chairman Johnson for holding this business meeting today. My thanks as well to 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. There is a nominee and a number of important bills on the agenda before us.

Among the bills we'll be considering today is a bill that would help improve cybersecurity across the government. First, the bill would require agencies to implement cybersecurity best practices and take other measures to protect their systems. Second, the bill would codify an existing cybersecurity program at the Department of Homeland Security commonly known as EINSTEIN. EINSTEIN analyzes network traffic entering and leaving federal civilian agencies to identify and prevent cyber threats. It is a critically important program especially in light of the seemingly never ending cyber attacks on our federal government. I thank my cosponsor Chairman Johnson for working with me on this very important bill.

The Committee will also consider important legislation to tackle government waste and fraud. The Stopping Improper Payments To Deceased People Act – S. 1073 - seeks to curb federal agency improper payments. The legislation, sponsored by myself, Chairman Johnson, and Senators McCaskill, Baldwin, and Booker, would build upon recently enacted improper payment laws by allowing and requiring federal agencies to use more accurate and complete lists of deceased individuals to confirm payment eligibility.

The Act would likely save hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars, in improper payments made mistakenly to people who are deceased. For example, the Office of Personnel Management Inspector General reported just four years ago that \$601 million in improper payments were made to federal retirees found to have died over the previous five years. However, such payments to dead people are not unique to this one program.

The Social Security Administration maintains the most complete federal database listing individuals who are reported to have died, which is available to a small number of federal agencies. Oddly, many federal agencies rely on a slimmed down, incomplete and less timely version of the death information. For example, the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, and Labor do not have access to the more complete database. In addition, most Inspectors General lack access to the complete death information of SSA. The legislation would also establish procedures to ensure more accurate death data. This is timely, common sense and bipartisan legislation that I urge my colleagues to support.

I am also eager for our Committee to discuss the nomination of Denise Turner Roth to be the Administrator of the General Services Administration. Ms. Roth is the Acting Administrator and Deputy Administrator of GSA. Prior to that, she spent five years as the Assistant City Manager

and then City Manager of Greensboro, North Carolina, overseeing the day-to-day operations of the city of over 277,000 residents. And I, along with Dan Tangerlini, our previous GSA Administrator, believe she is well qualified to be our next Administrator at GSA. I hope is we can report her nomination out of Committee without delay.

Speaking of delay, we have several nominees who were reported out of this Committee earlier this year who are still awaiting consideration by the full Senate. They include two excellent nominees to be Associate Judges on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. They continue to wait for the Senate to act. Both Judge Nooter and Judge Wellner were originally nominated back in 2013. The Senate should not treat well qualified nominees like this.

I'd also like to highlight the nomination of retired U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Earl Gay, first nominated by the President last September, to serve as Deputy Director of OPM. He has been waiting for a full Senate vote since January. Further delay on his confirmation is unacceptable, especially at a time like this. OPM has been without a Senate-confirmed Deputy Director for four years. The Senate can change that. It's imperative that we do so. And soon!

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.

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