

**Statement of
Senator Susan M. Collins
HSGAC Business Meeting
June 27, 2012**

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for once again putting together a productive agenda for Committee action this morning. Before we begin, I would like to speak briefly about a few of the bills we will be considering.

I want to thank the Senator from Hawaii for incorporating revisions to his Hatch Act bill to address concerns that I raised with the original version.

Perhaps the most important item before us this morning is the bill to End Trafficking in Government Contracting. We cannot allow government contractors to engage in any form of unlawful subjugation or trafficking in human beings, or to subsidize such behavior by their subcontractors. But unfortunately, we have found that our overseas contingency operations have sometimes involved unscrupulous individuals seeking to take advantage of third country nationals working in contingency environments by confiscating passports, providing inhumane living conditions or failing to repatriate individuals. This bill will require contractors to take proactive steps to avoid such exploitation.

Today's agenda also includes a common-sense measure to reduce unnecessary hurdles for our veterans returning to the civilian workforce, by allowing federal agencies to recognize situations where their military training satisfies federal licensing requirements. We should all applaud sensible efforts to improve veterans' employment opportunities.

Finally, let me make a point about the bill repealing or modifying outdated GAO report requirements. Congress relies on the GAO for its invaluable expertise, but budget realities and increasing Congressional demands threaten to create too great a burden on the GAO. This bill lightens

that burden by eliminating unnecessary reports, so the GAO can focus its expertise where it is needed most. I am hopeful the Committee will approve this bill this morning.