

Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson
Business Meeting
May 6, 2015

As prepared for delivery:

Good morning. The mission Ranking Member Carper and I set for this Committee is clear: to enhance the economic and national security of America. I am pleased that the legislation on today's business meeting agenda does just that.

Toward enhancing economic security, the Committee will consider the Federal Permitting Improvement Act of 2015, an Act that streamlines and makes more efficient the federal permitting process for major capital projects. During our last business meeting, Senators Portman and McCaskill agreed to postpone consideration of this bill at the request of Ranking Member Carper. Since that time, committee staff have worked together in good faith with folks from the Administration, and the agreed upon changes are reflected in the substitute amendment we will consider today.

The Committee will consider several other bills that improve the federal government's efficiency and transparency, including the Presidential Transitions Improvement Act of 2015, a bill introduced by Ranking Member Carper that I was happy to cosponsor. The bill improves the process of presidential transitions to ensure a new administration is fully prepared to govern on day one.

Additionally, the Committee will consider the Taxpayers Right-to-Know Act, a common-sense bill that will help taxpayers and the Congress identify ineffective and duplicative programs by requiring agencies to give an accurate account of each of their programs' cost and performance in a single, public location.

Toward enhancing national security, the Committee will consider the Arizona Borderlands Protection and Preservation Act. Senators McCain and Flake introduced this bill to ensure Customs and Border Protection agents have immediate access to federal lands within 100 miles of the border to better secure two sectors of our southwest border. I strongly support this bill and look forward to moving other pieces of legislation that strengthen border security.

Several other bills on our agenda will support our national security, including the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System Modernization Act of 2015 that I introduced with Senator McCaskill, which authorizes a "next generation" system that enables the President to quickly alert the public during a national emergency.

I look forward to reporting these and the other bills on our agenda, and continuing to work in a bipartisan fashion with my colleagues in this Committee and others, as well as in the House, to ensure these bills become law.