



**United States Senate**  
**Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs**  
Chairman Joseph I. Lieberman, ID-Conn.

Opening Statement of Chairman Joseph Lieberman  
Business Meeting  
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee  
February 15, 2011  
**As Prepared for Delivery**

The meeting will come to order. I'd like to thank the members and welcome everyone to the Committee's first business meeting of the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress and extend a special welcome to our new members - Senators Mark Begich, Ron Johnson, Rob Portman, and Rand Paul. We know you'll make a great contribution to the Committee and we hope you'll enjoy serving on the Committee as much as Senator Collins and I have.

The Committee has a proud history of working across party lines, which has enabled us to move significant legislation through Congress in the last decade, primarily to improve the nation's ability to prevent, prepare for, and respond to terrorist attacks and natural disasters through FEMA. I look forward to working with everybody on the Committee on the important items on our agenda this session.

We have two items of business today, both related to the Committee's organization: the adoption of our funding resolution and the adoption of our Committee rules. Senator Collins, would you like to say a few words before we move on?

Thank you, Senator Collins. Let's proceed to our first agenda item.

#### **FUNDING RESOLUTION**

The Committee's funding resolution will support the activities of the Committee and its five subcommittees through the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. The distribution of funds mirrors the Leadership agreement outlined in the 112th Congress Colloquy on Committee Funding.

Senator Collins?

#### **ADOPTION OF THE RULES**

Next, we will move to adoption of the Committee rules. Senate rules require that we adopt our own procedural rules at the beginning of each Congress. There are no changes in the rules before us here from the last Congress.

Is there any discussion?

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE DISCUSSION**

I would like to introduce the Chairs and Acting Ranking Members of our three permanent subcommittees and our two ad hoc subcommittees.

Senator Levin will continue to chair the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations with Senator Coburn as Ranking Member. This Committee, known as PSI, is the successor to an extraordinary history of investigative committees going back to Senator Harry Truman and through others who had this chairmanship. PSI under Senators Levin and Coburn has done some really consistently superb work, providing the American public with factually impeccable reports on whatever topic it scrutinized. I look forward to more great work from PSI in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Senator Akaka will continue to lead the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia. He loses his longtime partner Senator Voinovich, but takes on a new partner, Senator Johnson as Ranking Member. This committee's work is critical to improving the federal workforce, especially in the time of budget stress we're in now, I anticipate more of its excellent oversight of management issues.

Senator Carper continues as chair of the Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security. Senator Brown will serve as Ranking Member. The subcommittee's important work will take on added weight this year in regard to management of federal agencies because of the dangers presented by our national debt.

Senator McCaskill will continue to chair the Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight, which we created in the last session, with Senator Portman as Ranking Member. Senator McCaskill really did a terrific job of focusing attention on the outrageously poor oversight of federal contracts, and I know she and her new Ranking Member will continue to focus on waste, fraud, and abuse that go hand in hand with that inattention. The consequences of it are enormous because the federal government spends more than \$500 billion on contracts every year.

Senator Pryor will chair the newly created Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Disaster Recovery and Intergovernmental Affairs, and Senator Ensign will be ranking member. This is a combination of the subcommittee he previously chaired and one Senator Landrieu previously chaired and it made sense now to put them together. I look forward to the work of the new subcommittee on disaster recovery and DHS coordination with states, local governments, and the private sector.

### **COMMITTEE AGENDA**

We reported out a very good cyber security reform bill and this is a critical area of our homeland security, which needs attention to raise its defenses in this area. I think our offensive capabilities in cyber are quite good, but our defensive capabilities, especially in the private sector, are still lacking and the consequences of that could be severe. So our top priority now is to bring out a cyber security bill and to coordinate with the committees of jurisdiction, including particularly Commerce.

Secondly, the hearing we're going to have at 10:30 is at the Fort Hood massacre, a horrific case of homegrown radicalization. This continues to be an ever-increasing problem in our country, for our government and I want to stay on top of the report and the recommendations that we did about the Fort Hood killings, particularly with regards to the Department of Defense and the FBI.

But also we need in our government a more comprehensive program to confront the reality that a small group of Muslim-Americans are radicalizing and represent a new threat to our homeland security and how we together with the Muslim-American community can create programs to both confront and prevent that kind of radicalization. So that's the second thing.

A third is border security, particularly with regard to the Southern border. Senator McCain has a longstanding interest in this, he and I have talked with others on the Committee and sometime soon I'd like to have a series of hearings that hopefully can lead to further action on the question of border security, which might hopefully get not this Committee because we don't have jurisdiction but other committees to the broader question of immigration reform.

And then finally we really want to do a Department of Homeland Security authorization bill to not only authorize levels of funding but really to make changes in the original legislation that experience has suggested are needed. So it should be an active session of Congress.

And on the governmental affairs side very briefly I think that the work the subcommittee is doing on contracting oversight is critically important. We have the capacity on this Committee to really investigate, particularly with GAO or on our own, any activities of any branch of the federal government.

I would like to thank the distinguished Ranking Member and all my other colleagues for their hard work on behalf of the American people.

The business meeting is adjourned.