

Opening Statement of Rafael Borrás
Nominee for Under Secretary for Management, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Chairman Akaka, Senator Voinovich, and distinguished members of the Committee: I am humbled and honored to appear before you today as you consider my nomination by President Obama to serve as the next Under Secretary for Management at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Thank you for your consideration of my nomination. I thank the President for the opportunity to once again serve this great country and Secretary Napolitano for her confidence in me and her support throughout this confirmation process.

I also thank this Committee and its members for being guardians of the Department of Homeland Security. While I have only been an observer of this Department, your efforts obviously have safeguarded the institution and its mission, provided intelligent and thoughtful oversight, and legislatively ensured that the Department's management functions are properly considered in the context of government-wide policies. Not only were you responsible for the creation of the Department, you have led the fight in finding DHS a home at St. Elizabeths. You have ensured that the Department grew more resilient as a result of your investigation into Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and your subsequent legislative and oversight work reforming the Department. And I have learned from listening to those in the Department that you have instilled an understanding of the need to set goals and measure progress so the Department can be accountable to you and to the American taxpayer.

As an observer, I have noticed that the Department's interactions with this Committee, both the members and the staff, have fostered a climate of bipartisan collaboration, devoid of partisan rancor. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to ensure that this Department fulfills the vision of the Secretary and this Committee – "ONE DHS" that is an integrated, efficient, Department that understands and executes its mission.

There is no professional challenge or reward greater than ensuring that the Department of Homeland Security achieves its mission. If confirmed, I know that I will have the immense responsibility of providing management support to the mission of protecting America.

Early in life, I heard the call to public service, and over the course of a 27-year professional career in the public, non-profit, and private sectors, I have again and again been presented with opportunities to serve. With the love and support of my parents and many mentors, I was encouraged to enter public service. I have been able to combine my abilities to lead and inspire; my willingness to work hard to overcome hardened challenges; and my desire to assist others to grow and flourish. There have been moments of personal satisfaction and reward during my service to Metro-Dade County, the cities of Hartford and New Rochelle, and the Department of Commerce and GSA.

I look back over my long career and find many examples of the benefits of hard work and dedication to the public good. Working on rightsizing government and implementing Community Oriented Policing at the City of Hartford; leading an effort to implement integrated acquisition management at the Commerce Department; managing a high performing organization

at GSA and pushing it to even greater success; and, currently, achieving great success supporting the efforts of major public capital improvement projects at the federal and local levels while working in the private sector. At every progressive level of management responsibility I have held, I am confident that I have left behind a legacy of strong financial management, innovative acquisition reform, and a passionate dedication to working on behalf of our most important strategic asset – our employees.

If confirmed, I have three principal areas of focus at the Department of Homeland Security: financial management, acquisition management, and human capital management.

A) Financial Management – My major priorities in the financial management area include the following:

(1) I would assess the ability of the current financial systems to provide the necessary data to aid in the decision making process at the senior management levels of DHS. I would explore the development of an executive information system or dashboard to accomplish this goal. Since DHS is in the process of acquiring a new consolidated and authoritative asset, acquisition, and financial management system, an umbrella dashboard system may be a viable option to overcome what I believe is one of the major challenges to monitoring Departmental performance and reporting results. While at the Commerce Department, we developed a system to be used as a major decision support system called EARS. Through this system, we were able to consolidate accounting, budget, procurement, performance and human capital data into a single environment for the CFO, the Secretary, and senior officers throughout the Department. The system provided touch screen and drill down capability to procurement, personnel, payroll, and financial data for the components and the Office of the Secretary. It also enabled users to gauge Departmental performance utilizing a common platform that was available across the Department.

(2) I would look to immediately work with the CFO and his/her staff on implementing the existing Internal Controls Over Financial Reporting (ICOFR) playbook and to develop action plans to address all outstanding material weaknesses identified by either the IG or GAO. It is critically important to gain the support and confidence of both the GAO and the IG in supporting the major initiatives required to aid in the improvement and transformation of DHS.

(3) Another major priority would be to work closely on the evaluation of existing DHS performance measures, and recommendation of new measures. It is important to drive results throughout the Department, with a focus on measures that tie budget, agency and program success, and individual performance in a way that better allows DHS to demonstrate and communicate to the public and Congress the “return on investment.”

B) Acquisition Management -- I would improve the acquisition function at DHS in cooperation with the Chief Procurement Officer, I suggest DHS:

(1) Focus on the front end of the acquisition process, namely strengthening the requirements phase.

(2) Evaluate the use of an integrated approach to the entire acquisition lifecycle, by pulling together teams from business areas of Finance, Acquisition, and Information Technology to move the emphasis of acquisition away from measuring procurement time, to focusing on the outcome – what the program delivers. At the Department of Commerce, one of my most significant accomplishments was the implementation of such as program, which we called “Concept of Operations” (CONOPS).

(3) Strengthen the project management capabilities with the Headquarters and component agencies at DHS.

(4) Support and augment as possible, a robust intern program to begin to address our acquisition workforce challenges.

Also, if confirmed, I would review the existing Acquisition Review Board (ARB) process as well as the reporting relationship between the component acquisition personnel and the Office of Procurement to assess if changes or modifications are required.

C) Human Capital Management – If confirmed, I would ask the Chief Human Capital Officer to conduct a thorough assessment of available employee resources to assist the Headquarters and component agencies in meeting their workforce needs. Information support also appears to be lacking in the human capital area, and I would look to the development of the aforementioned dashboard system to aid in providing the necessary information to develop recruitment and retention plans.

Finally, if confirmed, I would focus on the root causes of the issues identified in the most recent Federal Employees Surveys. My review of the survey results suggests that although there are challenges, the Department’s employees demonstrate a very strong support for and connection to the Department’s mission. I believe that strong employee support for the Department’s mission can be an important tool to motivate and inspire employees in support of the Secretary’s “One DHS” goal.

In sum, my approach to these three areas of focus would provide an integrated solution process that would link an emphasis on financial management, acquisition review and transformation, and a holistic approach to human capital management that would help drive DHS toward improved management, accountability, and performance.

I pay tribute to those hard working and dedicated public servants who helped stand up the Department of Homeland Security. I especially want to recognize the contributions of the current Under Secretary for Management, Elaine Duke, who has given so much over her long and exemplary career, and has provided able and confident stewardship during this period of transition.

If confirmed, I would look forward to working with you and your staff, to provide effective and responsible stewardship toward the protection of our nation’s most valuable assets – the American people and our homeland. I look forward to taking your questions.