

Hearing Transcript

House Homeland Security Committee Markup on Homeland Security Legislation

March 8, 2017

MCCAUL:

A quorum being present, the Committee on Homeland Security will come to order.

The committee is meeting today for consideration of the following bills: H.R. 1238, the Securing our Agriculture and Food Act; H.R. 1258, the HSA Technical Corrections Act; H.R. 1294, the Reducing DHS Acquisition Cost Growth Act; H.R. 1297, the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Technical Correction Act of 2017; H.R. 1302, the Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel Exercise Act of 2017; H.R. 1309, the TSA Administrator Modernization Act; H.R. 1370, the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act; H.R. 876, the Aviation Employee Screening and Security Enhancement Act; H.R. 1353, the Transparency in Technological Acquisitions Act; H.R. 1359, the DHS Multiyear Acquisition Strategy Act; H.R. 1352, the DHS Acquisition Authorities Act; H.R. 1282, the DHS Acquisitions Review Board Act; H.R. 1365, the Department of Homeland Security Acquisition Innovation Act; and H.R. 1372, the Homeland Security For Children Act.

The chair announces that any requests for recorded votes may be rolled to the end of the meeting, and he may recess the committee at any point. Without objection, so ordered.

I now recognize myself for a brief opening statement.

This markup includes a number of important bills aimed at improving the acquisition process at the Department of Homeland Security as well as some important reforms to the operations of the Transportation Security Administration. Additionally, this markup includes a bill I introduced to authorize and give direction to an important campaign at the department aimed at combating human trafficking.

The Blue Campaign is a department-wide operation that provides tools to federal, state and local law enforcement as well as private sector organizations to increase awareness of the signs of human trafficking. The training and materials provided through this campaign will help to identify and prevent this tragic situation and the threat that it poses.

Ranking Member Thompson and I have worked on an amendment to further refine this legislation. And I'm hopeful members will join me in support of this important program.

The chair now recognizes the ranking member of the committee, Mr. Thompson.

THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, today's markup in some ways feels like *deja vu*. Since last Congress, this committee has worked on a bipartisan basis to advance an unprecedented number of measures to the full House. And we are poised to continue that record today.

We cannot ignore, however, that a lot has changed since the election. Sitting in the Oval Office is a man who's made name in politics by promoting a conspiracy theory that President Obama was not born in the United States and, since taking office, has doubled-down in trafficking in lies to bolster his ego and deflect from embarrassing missteps.

In tweet after tweet, this president has adopted a "shoot first, ask questions later" mentality. He pedals falsehoods that, wittingly or not, undermine our democracy and diminish our nation's moral legitimacy.

First, there were unsubstantiated claims that 3 million to 5 million people voted illegally in the 2016 election, a charge he directed Vice President Pence to investigate after making the claim.

Then this past Saturday after feeling the heat over mounting evidence that his associates had repeated contacts with individuals associated with the Putin government, the president engaged in another early-morning Twitter tirade tweeting, "Terrible, just found out that Obama had my wires tapped in Trump Tower just before the victory. Nothing found. This is McCarthyism."

Seemingly to give his baseless claim credibility, the president has asked Congress to investigate, though he's not yet furnished evidence on where he got his information. One thing we do know is that it was probably not from the FBI or ODNI since the officials that would have been involved have both indicated that this claim is baseless.

Mr. Chairman, they don't call baseless allegations trumped-up charges for nothing.

In the meantime, while Vice President Pence and Congress scurry to investigate trumped-up charges, this administration has not so quietly upended our border and immigration system in cruel and unjustifiable ways.

Now we just recently have found out that the Coast Guard budget will be cut to fund the so-called border wall. As much as we focus on the talk inside the Beltway, President Trump's effort to fulfill his arbitrary campaign promises are affecting folks all across the country and have hit home for me in recent weeks.

Remember the name Daniela Vargas? Until a few days ago when ICE officers pulled her over on her way back from a DACA rally, she had been living in my community, Jackson, Mississippi. Today, Daniela is confined to a detention center in Louisiana where she awaits deportation to a country she's not stepped foot in since she was 7 when her parents brought her to the United States. Daniela is not a criminal or a danger to our community. To the contrary, she was a straight-A student with dreams of a career where she could give back to the country that has given so much.

ICE is stonewalling me and others in the hopes that we will look away. But we will not. We will not look away when the president erects barriers between nations, be it a border wall with Mexico or a Muslim ban on foreign travelers.

We will not look away from what we are hearing about the first budget submission from DHS, which will slash funding for first responders, the Coast Guard and a myriad of other critical homeland security priorities to fund the president's misguided immigration and border plans.

While long-term acquisition plans for the department or TSA are a good thing as called for in two of the measures to be considered today, we cannot turn a blind eye to the bigger picture. The uncertainty and significant fluctuation in the DHS budget undermines the department's ability to not only carry out its current activities, but also to plan.

That said, we have an obligation in this committee to provide guidance to the department. The 14 measures to be considered today do just that. They provide the guidance.

I look forward to advancing these measures in a bipartisan fashion.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

MCCAUL:

All right. Thank the ranking member.

Other members are reminded that opening statements may be submitted for the record. By agreement, the chair and ranking member of the committee, by unanimous consent, shall use an amendment roster today.

THOMPSON:

Mr. Chairman?

MCCAUL:

The ranking member is recognized.

THOMPSON:

Reserving the right to object, I will not object, will the chair please explain our agreement regarding the amendment roster? I yield to the chairman.

MCCAUL:

I thank the gentleman and all committee members for agreeing to the use of an amendment roster.

We have agreed that the bills be open to amendment at any point, that we shall take up amendments in the order listed on the roster. The chair will allow members to offer amendments listed on the roster out of order to the extent practicable and in a manner not prohibited by House or committee rules. Amendments not listed on the roster may be considered at the conclusion of consideration of the roster.

The chair would also note that several of the bills on the roster have no amendments. And so in the hope that we could expedite this markup, I intend to ask unanimous consent to consider those bills without any amendments en bloc.

I would still plan to recognize each member that has a bill included as part of this agreement. The bills I will be asking unanimous consent to consider en bloc are H.R. 1238, H.R. 1258, H.R. 1294, H.R. 1297, H.R. 1302 and H.R. 1309.

Additionally, it's my understanding there's a bipartisan agreement on most of these amendments. Members who have more than one amendment to any bill may be permitted to offer their amendments en bloc if they wish.

THOMPSON:

I thank the chair for his explanation and withdraw my reservation.

MCCAUL:

I now call up H.R. 1238, H.R. 1258, H.R. 1294, H.R. 1297, H.R. 1302 and H.R. 1309 and ask unanimous consent that they be considered en bloc. Without objection, so ordered.

The bills were circulated in advance. Printed copies are available.

The clerk shall designate the bills.

THE CLERK:

H.R. 1238, H.R. 1258, H.R. 1294, H.R. 1297, H.R. 1302 and H.R. 1309.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the first reading is dispensed with. The bills are considered read and open to amendment at any point.

I ask unanimous consent to include in the record a statement from Representative Young on his bill, H.R. 1238. Without objection, so ordered.

I now recognize the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry, for a statement on his bill, H.R. 1258.

Mr. Perry?

PERRY:

Sorry, Mr. Chairman, it just showed up. I'm looking for it.

MCCAUL:

I was looking for you.

PERRY:

This bill makes important technical corrections to the Homeland Security Act of 2002, which will help the department clarify its roles and responsibilities so it can more effectively execute its important mission of securing our homeland. And I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of it.

That's the explanation, Mr. Chairman. I yield.

MCCAUL:

The gentleman yields back.

The gentleman from Florida, Mr. Rutherford, is recognized for five minutes on his bill, H.R. 1294.

RUTHERFORD:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Thompson. Thank you for the opportunity to bring this important legislation before the committee.

Last week, Chairman McCaul and I introduced H.R. 1294, the Reducing Department of Homeland Security Acquisition Cost Growth Act which would prevent wasteful spending of taxpayer dollars by holding DHS agencies more accountable in administering their major acquisition programs, that's \$300 million or more, and by giving Congress greater oversight over these troubled programs.

The Department of Homeland Security's acquisition programs represent hundreds of billions of dollars in spending, but they repeatedly face cost overruns and schedule delays.

The Government Accountability Office and the Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General have reported on the longstanding challenge DHS faces in managing major acquisition programs. In fact, since 2015 the GAO found that 20 of the 22 major acquisition programs experienced cost growth, schedule slips or both.

And when DHS fails to manage these programs properly, taxpayer dollars are wasted instead of being used to provide FEMA, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Customs and Border Protection the tools that they need to do their job.

With the passage of H.R. 1294, we can stop the waste of these tax dollars by ensuring that Congress can provide greater oversight over major acquisition programs and can implement solutions quickly to defer any setbacks and cost overruns.

And I thank the members of the committee for your consideration and I'll look forward to the passage of the bill.

Thank you. Yield back.

MCCAUL:

The gentleman yields back.

The gentlewoman from New Jersey, Ms. Watson Coleman, is recognized for five minutes on her bill, H.R. 1297.

WATSON COLEMAN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I am pleased to be reintroducing H.R. 1297, the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review Technical Correction Act, which seeks to improve the quality of the review that is produced by DHS every four years.

Under current law, DHS is required to do a comprehensive review of the department to ensure that its programs and activities are aligned with a unified, strategic framework for homeland security missions and goals.

DHS has issued two QHSRs, in 2010 and 2014, and is in the process of preparing the review due in 2018. My bill is a product of collaboration between the committee, DHS and the Government Accountability Office which has identified some key areas for improvement and was approved by the House last Congress.

My bill puts emphasis on stakeholder engagement by requiring documentation regarding communications with stakeholders and information on how feedback from stakeholders influences the review. It also seeks to enhance stakeholder engagement by specifying certain key stakeholders to be consulted.

To ensure that the risk assessment undertaken to produce this review is repeatable in future years, my bill requires DHS to retain all information regarding the risk assessment. This bill will ensure that future QHSRs help the department meet the challenges of the ever- changing threat picture.

I appreciate the opportunity to present this and the support of the chairman and the ranking member for my bill.

And I yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MCCAUL:

The gentlewoman yields back.

The gentleman from New York, Mr. Katko, is recognized for five minutes on his bill, H.R. 1309.

KATKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

For an agency that is so young, TSA has been plagued with numerous bureaucratic challenges. Many of these issues stem from a lack of consistent leadership at the top.

Since I came to Congress in January of 2015, TSA has had five different individuals serve as administrator, both as appointees and as acting administrators. This is a staggering, troubling number.

The TSA Administrator Modernization Act of 2017 is a common-sense bill that reestablishes the administrator's official position and five-year term, just as Congress originally intended when they created TSA in the wake of 9/11.

Ensuring strong, consistent leadership at such an important security agency is a bipartisan responsibility. I appreciate the support of the members from both sides of the aisle, and I especially thank the chairman and ranking member for moving this bill through committee.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

MCCAUL:

The gentleman yields back.

There are no amendments listed on the roster.

Are there any amendments to any of these bills?

Hearing none, the question now occurs on agreeing to the bills H.R. 1238, H.R. 1258, H.R. 1294, H.R. 1297, H.R. 1302 and H.R. 1309.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it and the bills are agreed to.

Without objection, the bills are reported to the House with a favorable recommendation and the motion to reconsider is laid on the table.

I now call up the bill I have introduced, H.R. 1370, the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017.

The bill was circulated in advance. Printed copies are available.

The clerk shall designate the bill.

THE CLERK:

H.R. 1370.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the reading is dispensed with. The bill is considered read and open to amendment at any point.

I now recognize myself for a statement on the bill.

Human trafficking is a multi-billion-dollar industry that enslaves 20 million people around the world, whether for the purposes of prostitution, sex exploitation or forced labor.

According to the FBI, the most effective way to investigate human trafficking is through a collaborative, multi-agency approach with our federal, state, local and tribal partners. My bill recognizes and supports the work of the Department of Homeland Security in their role to combat this scourge on our society.

H.R. 1370 authorizes an important and lifesaving campaign at the department to try to prevent human trafficking. The Blue Campaign is a unified effort by the department to conduct outreach, to enhance awareness of trafficking and provide training and materials to those in the best position to identify the victims.

The campaign works in collaboration with local law enforcement, government, nongovernmental and private organizations to identify victims and train others in identification techniques.

The department uses the resources and expertise of the Customs and Border Patrol, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center to help with this effort.

My bills adds the Transportation Security Administration to this fight by training its personnel to recognize the signs of trafficking and serve as a liaison to aviation workers.

The amendment Ranking Member Thompson and I worked on will expand upon these efforts further by asking the department to share information across the department and with the national

network of fusion centers regarding patterns and practices of human trafficking and potential connections to terrorist activities.

This is an important campaign and piece of legislation. I urge all members to support this bill.

Is there any further discussion on the bill?

There being no further discussion, the committee will move to consideration of the amendments on the roster. Per the roster agreement, listed first is an amendment offered by the gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Thompson.

Would the gentleman like to offer his amendment?

THOMPSON:

Yes, Mr. Chairman. I have an amendment at the desk and ask for its consideration at this time.

MCCAUL:

The clerk shall report the amendment.

THE CLERK:

Amendment to H.R. 1370 offered by Mr. Thompson.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the reading is dispensed with.

Mr. Thompson is recognized for five minutes.

THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I offer this amendment in support of your legislation, H.R. 1370, the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017.

Like you, I regard the Blue Campaign as a worthy program to authorize and support. The Blue Campaign is an important and multifaceted program for DHS to help prevent human trafficking and assist victims. This program provides the department with the structure to ensure its personnel is trained to identify and investigate these criminal activities in a unified manner.

The Blue Campaign is also an excellent tool for DHS and federal, state and local law enforcement to collaborate to dismantle human trafficking networks.

Another important aspect of this program is its outreach to non- government and private sector entities to partner with the federal government to assist victims of human trafficking and prevent others from falling into the same.

My amendment complements the underlying bill by emphasizing the importance of clear guidance and training for all active partners and clarifies the various activities and collaboration the department should continue to promote.

With that, I yield back.

MCCAUL:

The gentleman yields back.

I am supportive of his amendment. Our staff has worked together very well on it and I think it's a good addition to the bill.

Is there any further discussion on the amendment?

There being no further discussion, the question now occurs on the amendment offered by Mr. Thompson.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it and the amendment is agreed to.

There are no additional amendments listed on the roster. Are there any further amendments to the bill?

There being no further amendments, the question now occurs on agreeing to the bill H.R. 1370 as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

(CELL PHONE RINGS)

Sorry about the "Bells of St. Mary's."

(LAUGHTER)

That was my phone.

THOMPSON:

Oh, I knew it was your phone.

MCCAUL:

Let me do that again.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it and the bill is agreed to.

The question now occurs on reporting the bill H.R. 1370 as amended to the House with a favorable recommendation.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it and the motion is agreed to.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table. Staff is authorized to make any technical and conforming changes.

I now call up H.R. 876, the Aviation Employee Screening and Security Enhancement Act of 2017 and discharge the Subcommittee on Transportation and Protective Security from further consideration.

The bill was circulated in advance. Printed copies are available.

The clerk shall designate the bill.

THE CLERK:

H.R. 876.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the first reading is dispensed with and the bill is considered read and open to amendment at any point.

An amendment in the nature of a substitute has been offered by the gentleman from New York, Mr. Katko.

Does the gentleman wish to offer his amendment?

KATKO:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

MCCAUL:

The clerk shall report the amendment.

THE CLERK:

Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 876 offered by Mr. Katko.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the reading is dispensed with. The amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered base text. For purposes of amendment, the amendment in the nature of a substitute was noticed to all committee members, in compliance with the rules.

The chair recognizes the gentleman from New York, for five minutes.

KATKO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Aviation Employees Screening and Security Act of 2017 implements a number of recommendations outlined in my subcommittee's recently released report on insider threats to America's airports.

In fact, just three days after the release of this report, an insider drug-smuggling ring was discovered involving aviation workers and TSA employees, further highlighting this threat. This drug- smuggling ring included smuggling of 20 tons of cocaine by bypassing security measures at airports by employees at TSA as well as airline employees.

After extensive oversight in the last Congress, the subcommittee found a number of security vulnerabilities in access controls and employee vetting at airports across the United States. This legislation seeks to close these concerning gaps in security by providing Congress essential data related to employee screening and enhance the current employee inspections taking place at airports.

After a number of insider threat-related attacks at airports overseas, along with plots here in the United States, it is essential that we stay on top of the challenging threat landscape.

The amendment in the nature of a substitute to this bill, which we are considering as base text for amendment today, incorporates stakeholder and agency feedback to the bill and strengthens the legislation. H.R. 876 will enhance employee vetting requirements, improve the procedures

governing the way airports issue security credentials and reform TSA employees' screening operations to be more targeted and effective.

Simply put, this bill will directly serve to mitigate the growing insider threat to aviation security and help protect the traveling public from threats to their safety.

I commend the bipartisan support of this bill by nearly every member of the Transportation and Protective Security Subcommittee, and particularly thank the ranking member, Ms. Watson Coleman, for her support.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

MCCAUL:

The gentleman yields back.

Is there any further discussion on the amendment in the nature of a substitute?

There being no further discussion, the committee will move to consideration of the amendments to the amendment in the nature of a substitute listed on the roster.

Per the roster agreement, listed next is an amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by the gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Thompson.

Would the gentleman like to offer his amendment?

THOMPSON:

Yes, Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, on the roster, and I ask that it be considered at this time.

MCCAUL:

The clerk shall report the amendment.

THE CLERK:

Amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 876 offered by Mr. Thompson.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the reading is dispensed with.

Mr. Thompson is recognized for five minutes.

THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the Katko amendment in the nature of a substitute orders TSA to increase covert testing of employee screening efforts at airports around the nation. I support such testing.

However, I was concerned that the bill as written calls for TSA to provide testing results to all aviation stakeholders, even ones who do not operate at that airport. My amendment will ensure that the results of each test is only shared with the appropriate stakeholders, the airport operator and, as appropriate, air carriers that have a presence at that airport.

Mr. Chairman, before I yield back, I'd like to express my appreciation that the bill, as we consider it today, reflects input from stakeholders representing airport workers. I'm pleased that the bill now grants labor unions representing credentialed employees are seated at the table as their perspectives are vital to conversations involving the populations that they represent.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

MCCAUL:

The gentleman yields back.

Is there any further discussion on the amendment?

KATKO:

Mr. Chairman?

MCCAUL:

Mr. Katko is recognized.

KATKO:

Thank you.

And I appreciate your comments, Mr. Thompson, and I appreciate the amendment. I fully support it and I think it's a good addition to the bill.

And with that, I yield back.

MCCAUL:

The gentleman yields back.

Any further discussion?

There being no further discussion, the question now occurs on the amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Mr. Thompson.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it and the amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute is agreed to.

There are no additional amendments listed on the roster.

Are there any further amendments to the amendment in the nature of a substitute?

There being no further amendments, the question now occurs on agreeing to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 876 as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The amendment in the nature of a substitute is agreed to.

The question now occurs on reporting H.R. 876 as amended to the House with a favorable recommendation.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The motion is agreed to.

Without objection, a motion to reconsider is laid on the table. Staff is authorized to make any technical and conforming changes.

I now call up H.R. 1353, the Transparency in Technological Acquisitions Act of 2017.

The bill was circulated in advance and printed copies are available.

The clerk shall designate the bill.

THE CLERK:

H.R. 1353.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the first reading is dispensed with and the bill is considered read and open to amendment at any point.

The gentlelady from New York, Ms. Rice, is recognized for five minutes.

RICE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

H.R. 1353 will require the TSA administrator to update Congress annually instead of biannually about the status of TSA's five-year technology investment plan. And it requires this report to include information about any acquisitions completed during the fiscal year prior to the one in which the report shall be submitted.

H.R. 1353 also amends the Homeland Security Act to require the administrator to notify this committee and the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation of any change made to the plan, no later than 90 days after the change is made. And it requires the administrator to notify airports and airlines of any changes made to the plan as well.

Finally, H.R. 1353 requires the administrator within 30 days of enactment to provide this committee and our Senate counterparts with a report disclosing any TSA equipment that is in operation after the end of its life cycle or the end of its useful life projection for the equipment.

The idea for this bill emerged from a roundtable discussion we held on the Transportation Security Subcommittee last year where manufacturers and other airport security stakeholders expressed concerns about the fact that TSA's five-year acquisition plan and TSA's fiscal year 2017 budget request each reflected different acquisition priorities.

Requiring TSA to provide annual updates on the acquisition plan and to notify us and industry stakeholders about any changes to the plan will provide much needed clarity, certainty and transparency as TSA pursues the plan.

I want to thank my cosponsors, Transportation Security Subcommittee Chairman John Katko, Ranking Member Bonnie Watson Coleman and Congressman Bill Keating. This is bipartisan, common-sense legislation and I urge my colleagues from both parties to give it their full support.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

MCCAUL:

The gentlelady yields back.

Is there any further discussion of the bill?

There being no further discussion, and there are no amendments listed on the roster, are there any other amendments to the bill?

Hearing none, the question now occurs on agreeing to the bill H.R. 1353.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The bill is agreed to.

The question now occurs on reporting the bill H.R. 1353 as amended to the House with a favorable recommendation.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The motion is agreed to.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table. Staff is authorized to make any technical and conforming changes.

I now call up H.R. 1249, DHS Multiyear Acquisition Strategy Act of 2017.

The bill was circulated in advance. Printed copies are available.

The clerk shall designate the bill.

THE CLERK:

H.R. 1249.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the reading is dispensed with. The bill is considered read and open to amendment at any point.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Fitzpatrick, is recognized for five minutes on the bill.

FITZPATRICK:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Thompson.

The Department of Homeland Security has faced longstanding challenges in managing its major acquisition program. These programs cost the department over \$7 billion a year and are a significant burden on the American taxpayers.

Although DHS has taken measures to improve acquisition management, it continues to be at high risk for fraud, waste and abuse. If the department is unable to effectively oversee its major acquisition program, they will be unable to provide front-line operators with the technologies and the resources they need in order to perform their vital duties.

H.R. 1249, the DHS Multiyear Acquisition Strategy Act of 2017, requires DHS to establish a strategy as part of each future year's homeland security program in order to navigate all DHS acquisitions while also allowing flexibility to address ever-changing threats and risks.

This will help industry better understand, organize and coordinate resources to meet the future acquisition needs of the Department of Homeland Security. By passing this bipartisan measure, we can ensure effectiveness and efficiency at DHS while protecting taxpayer dollars.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back the balance of my time.

MCCAUL:

The gentleman yields back.

Any further discussion on the bill?

There being no further discussion of the bill, the committee will move to consideration of the amendments on the roster. There are no amendments listed on the roster.

Are there any amendments to this bill?

Hearing none, the question now occurs on agreeing to the bill H.R. 1249.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it and the bill is agreed to.

The question now occurs on reporting the bill H.R. 1249 to the House with a favorable recommendation.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it and the motion is agreed to.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table. Staff is authorized to make any technical and conforming changes.

I now call up H.R. 1252, the DHS Acquisition Authorities Act of 2017.

The bill was circulated in advance and printed copies are available.

The clerk shall report the bill.

THE CLERK:

H.R. 1252.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the reading is dispensed with. The bill is considered read and open to amendment at any point.

The gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Higgins, is recognized for five minutes on his bill.

HIGGINS:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Esteemed colleagues, today I offer H.R. 1252, the Department of Homeland Securities Act of 2017, for your consideration. This is a good government piece of legislation that will promote accountability in DHS acquisition programs.

The bill establishes the undersecretary for management as the department's chief acquisition officer responsible for approving, pausing, modifying or canceling major acquisition programs as needed.

Although the Department of Homeland Security has taken steps to improve acquisition management, it remains an area at high risk of waste, fraud and abuse according to the Government Accountability Office and the Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General.

It's imperative that DHS provide strong accountability mechanisms to ensure that major acquisition programs are efficient and effective. And I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

I yield back.

MCCAUL:

The gentleman yields back.

Any further discussion on the bill?

There being no further discussion, the committee will move to consideration of the amendments on the roster. Per the roster agreement, listed first is an amendment offered by the gentleman from California, Mr. Correa.

CORREA:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have an amendment at the desk and ask for its consideration at this time.

Mr. Chairman, my amendment seeks to improve...

MCCAUL:

Will the gentleman yield for a second?

The clerk shall report the amendment.

THE CLERK:

Amendment to H.R. 1352 offered by Mr. Correa.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the reading of the amendment is dispensed with.

Mr. Correa is recognized for five minutes.

CORREA:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My amendment seeks to improve the underlying bill by ensuring that when the undersecretary for management advises the secretary about acquisition options, there is consideration, where appropriate, of underlying innovative acquisition approaches.

This amendment falls in line with H.R. 1365, the DHS Acquisition Innovation Act, which authorizes the department to test and develop emerging best practices in acquisition and distribution, those best practices throughout the department.

I believe this amendment will keep DHS on a positive trajectory with respect to managing its acquisitions.

With that, I yield back.

MCCAUL:

The gentleman yields back.

Is there any further discussion on the amendment?

There being no further discussion, the question now occurs on the amendment offered by Mr. Correa.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

There are no further amendments listed on the roster.

Are there any other amendments to the bill?

Hearing none, the question now occurs on agreeing to the bill H.R. 1252 as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The bill is agreed to.

The question now occurs on reporting the bill H.R. 1252 as amended to the House with a favorable recommendation.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The motion is agreed to.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table. Staff is authorized to make any technical and conforming changes.

I now call up H.R. 1282, the DHS Acquisition Review Board Act of 2017.

The bill was circulated in advance. Printed copies are available.

The clerk shall designate the bill.

THE CLERK:

H.R. 1282.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the reading is dispensed with. The bill is considered read and open to amendment at any point.

The gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Garrett, is recognized for five minutes on his bill.

GARRETT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Thompson.

Today I offer H.R. 1282, the Acquisition Review Board Act. Now, this bill works in conjunction with H.R. 1249 and 1252 carried today by Messrs. Fitzpatrick and Higgins respectively.

Mr. Chairman, we've seen over the past decade-plus predictable, perpetual cost overruns in areas overseen by the DHS. Twenty of 22 acquisition programs had cost overruns or schedule slips or both. Six of 22 major acquisition programs had no acquisition program baselines.

Over 12 years, the GAO has designated the DHS major acquisitions programs as high risk, meaning that they are overly susceptible to fraud, waste and abuse.

What this bill would do, Mr. Chairman, is authorize the Acquisition Review Board to oversee major acquisition programs and encourage acquisition program baselines to minimize delays and overruns in costs of procurement.

It is for the foregoing reasons, Mr. Chairman, that I ask my colleagues to pass this bill. And I thank you and yield back the balance of my time.

MCCAUL:

The gentleman yields back.

Is there any further discussion on the bill?

There being no further discussion, the committee will move to consideration of the amendments on the roster. The first is an amendment offered by the gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Thompson.

Would the gentleman like to offer his amendment?

THOMPSON:

Yes, Mr. Chairman. I have an amendment at the desk and I ask for its consideration at this time.

MCCAUL:

The clerk shall report the amendment.

THE CLERK:

Amendment to H.R. 1282 offered by Mr. Thompson.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the reading of the amendment is dispensed with.

Mr. Thompson is recognized for five minutes.

THOMPSON:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, my amendment seeks to improve the underlying bill by requiring the undersecretary for management to provide information on the activities of the Acquisition Review Board to this committee on an annual basis.

Specifically, my amendment requires DHS to transmit acquisition decision memoranda as well as other important information about how it is carrying out its important oversight activities to ensure that DHS continues to make progress in how it is managing acquisitions.

It is important that this committee continues to do consistent oversight. Adoption of my amendment will help us do just that.

With that, I yield back.

MCCAUL:

The gentleman yields back.

Any further discussion on the amendment?

There being no further discussion, the question now occurs on the amendment offered by Mr. Thompson.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

There are no other amendments listed on the roster.

Are there any other amendments to this bill?

Hearing none, the question now occurs on agreeing to the bill H.R. 1282 as amended.

All in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The bill is agreed to.

The question now occurs on reporting the bill H.R. 1282 as amended to the House with a favorable recommendation.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The motion is agreed to.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table. Staff is authorized to make any technical and conforming changes.

I now call up H.R. 1365, the Department of Homeland Security Acquisitions Innovation Act.

The bill was circulated in advance. Printed copies are available.

The clerk shall designate the bill.

THE CLERK:

H.R. 1365.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the reading is dispensed with. The bill is considered read and open to amendment.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Correa, is recognized for five minutes on his bill.

CORREA:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm pleased the committee is considering my legislation, the DHS Acquisition Innovation Act. It seeks to authorize a bright spot in the Department of Homeland Security's acquisition shop in its efforts to develop and promote acquisition innovation.

An example is the procurement innovation lab, or PIL, a unique testing environment the department has utilized to procure innovative technologies and to speed up procurement processes and to institutionalize acquisition best practices.

Through what DHS calls the PIL, DHS reports that it has been able to cut procurement lead time by more than half for a competitively awarded, multi-million-dollar cybersecurity contract.

Innovation in the acquisition space is vital, given the ever-changing technological climate. My bill builds off DHS innovation efforts by authorizing the undersecretary for management to designate an individual within the department to be responsible for acquisition innovation initiatives.

Through such initiatives, the department can test and develop emerging best practices in acquisition to make those best practices an available component.

The bill also looks to DHS to establish metrics to assess the impact of its innovation efforts, including its effect on cost, operational efficiency and collaboration within the private sector. Innovations in acquisition are imperative to the success of DHS.

I appreciate the support on this legislation, and I yield back.

MCCAUL:

The gentleman yields back.

Any further discussion on the bill?

There being no further discussion, the committee will move to consideration of the amendments on the roster.

Per the roster agreement, listed first is an amendment offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Perry.

Would the gentleman like to offer his amendment?

PERRY:

Yes, Mr. Chairman. I have two amendments on the roster and I ask unanimous consent that they be considered en bloc at this time.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, so ordered.

The clerk shall report the en bloc amendment.

THE CLERK:

An en bloc amendment to H.R. 1365 offered by Mr. Perry.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the reading is dispensed with.

Mr. Perry is recognized for five minutes.

PERRY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Amendment 032 would require the undersecretary for management to assess the impacts of ongoing efforts to innovate and improve the acquisition process on the private sector by, number one, engaging with industry and, number two, obtaining feedback from the industry and, finally, number three, incorporating industry feedback into future acquisition innovation efforts.

Amendment 033 would require the department to provide information to Congress on acquisition innovation efforts for a specified time period rather than a report indefinitely. That information should include, one, outcomes of DHS's efforts to distribute best practices throughout the department, and, two, the criteria used to identify specific acquisition programs to be included in acquisition innovation efforts and the outcomes of those activities and recommendations as necessary to enhance acquisition innovation.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield.

MCCAUL:

The gentleman yields back.

Is there any further discussion on the en bloc amendment?

There being no further discussion, the question now occurs on the en bloc amendment offered by Mr. Perry.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The en bloc amendment is agreed to.

There are no other amendments listed on the roster.

Are there any other amendments to this bill?

Hearing none, the question now occurs on agreeing to the bill H.R. 1365 as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The bill is agreed to.

The question now occurs on reporting the bill H.R. 1365 as amended to the House with a favorable recommendation.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The motion is agreed to.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table. Staff is authorized to make any technical and conforming changes.

I now call up H.R. 1372, the Homeland Security for Children Act.

The bill was circulated in advance. Printed copies are available.

The clerk shall designate the bill.

THE CLERK:

H.R. 1372.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the reading is dispensed with. The bill is considered read and open to amendment at any point.

An amendment in the nature of a substitute has been offered by the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Payne.

Does the gentleman wish to offer his amendment?

PAYNE:

I do.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, so ordered.

The clerk shall report the amendment.

THE CLERK:

Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1372 offered by Mr. Payne.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the reading is dispensed with. The amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered base text for purposes of amendment.

This amendment was notified to committee members, in compliance with the rules.

The chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, for five minutes, to explain his amendment.

PAYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment I filed in the nature of a substitute be considered at this time.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, so ordered.

PAYNE:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As ranking member on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications Subcommittee, I have had the opportunity to assess how well we incorporate different populations into our emergency planning efforts.

Although the department has come a long way since Hurricane Katrina, former FEMA Administrator Fugate acknowledged before the subcommittee just last week that incorporating the needs of certain vulnerable populations, like children, is not quite in our national DNA yet.

Indeed, in early February, Save the Children alerted by subcommittee that 80 percent of the National Commission on Children and Disasters recommendations from 2010 remain open.

Taking a broader look across DHS mission areas, it became clear that it is not just FEMA that needs to ensure that these policies and procedures take into account the unique needs of children. That is why I introduced H.R. 1272, the Homeland Security for Children Act. And I am pleased we are considering it today.

This is an important measure and is designed to make the needs of children a priority within the Department of Homeland Security.

My amendment in the nature of a substitute directs DHS undersecretary for strategy, policy and plans to incorporate feedback from children's organizations into department-wide activity.

This legislation also formally authorizes an existing children's technical expert position at FEMA to encourage incorporating the needs of children into all emergency planning, response, recovery and mitigation activities.

Former FEMA Administrator Fugate created the position of children's technical expert in response to a FEMA National Advisory Council recommendation, and at last week's subcommittee hearing expressed his support for codifying this position in law.

Despite the progress made towards incorporating children in disaster planning, response and recovery efforts, there is still much left to be done.

This bipartisan legislation has been endorsed by Save the Children which has submitted a letter of support. I ask unanimous consent to submit the letter into the record.

MCCAUL:

And without objection, so ordered.

PAYNE:

With that, I urge my colleagues to support my amendment in the nature of a substitute as well as the amendment I filed, which makes technical changes to the underlying bill.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

MCCAUL:

The gentleman yields back.

Is there any further discussion on the amendment in the nature of a substitute or the technical amendment thereto?

There being no further discussion, the question now occurs on the amendment to the amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Mr. Payne.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The amendment is agreed to.

There are no additional amendments listed on the roster.

Are there any further amendments to the amendment in the nature of a substitute?

There being no further amendments, the question now occurs on agreeing to the amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 1372 as amended.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The amendment in the nature of a substitute is agreed to.

The question now occurs on reporting H.R. 1372 as amended to the House with a favorable recommendation.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

All those opposed, signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the chair, the ayes have it. The motion is agreed to.

Without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid on the table. Staff is authorized to make any technical and conforming changes.

This concludes consideration of the bills noticed by the committee today.

Let me just say in closing we marked up 14 bills now that will go to the House. I think it's a good start for this year.

And I also want to thank the staff on both sides of the aisle for working so well together to get these 14 bills marked up and on to the floor of the House.

The gentleman from Wisconsin is recognized for a motion, Mr. Gallagher.

GALLAGHER:

Mr. Chairman, pursuant to Rule 22, Clause 1 of the Rules of the House, I move that the committee authorize the chairman to offer such motions as may be necessary in the House to go to conference with the Senate on the bills ordered reported by this committee today or on similar Senate bills.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, the motion is agreed to.

THOMPSON:

Mr. Chairman?

MCCAUL:

The ranking member is recognized.

THOMPSON:

Mr. Chairman, pursuant to House Rule 11, Clause 2(L), I ask that members have two calendar days to file with the clerk of the committee supplemental, additional or minority views on each of the bills ordered reported by the committee today.

MCCAUL:

Without objection, so ordered.

There being no further business to transact, the committee stands adjourned.