

**Opening Statement**  
**Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson**  
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Full Committee Hearing:  
“Oversight of Department of Homeland Security Science & Technology Directorate”  
**October 27, 2015**

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to welcome Under Secretary Brothers back to the Committee. The last time you testified for us, you had only been in the job for 5 months. I look forward to hearing your testimony about the changes you’ve implemented in the last year, and your thoughts on what this Committee can do in a reauthorization bill to support your efforts to strengthen the security and resiliency of the United States through science and technology.

We’ve previously heard testimony about GAO’s 2012 recommendation that “DHS develop policies and guidance for defining, overseeing, coordinating, and tracking R&D activities across the department, and that S&T establish time frames and milestones for collecting and evaluating feedback from its customers.” We have also heard criticism of test and evaluation procedures, the quality of external input, relationship with the operational components of DHS and other customers, and employee morale. Under Dr. Brothers’ leadership, the S&T Directorate has defined R&D, published a strategic plan, undertaken a major overhaul of the S&T Advisory Committee, and developed several program and management initiatives to strengthen the work of the S&T Directorate and make it a more effective partner to the rest of DHS.

While I’m sure it was not easy, Dr. Brothers, you may look back at the development of the strategic plan as being the easy part of the job. Now you need to implement and institutionalize your vision. As you know, you are not the first Under Secretary to inherit an extremely challenged S&T Directorate, nor the first to undertake major reforms in an effort to right the ship. The constant change with every new leader has surely contributed to the challenges facing the S&T Directorate, as well as to very low employee morale. In your written testimony you spelled out five priorities for your tenure as Under Secretary. I’d like to hear from you what you hope S&T will look like when it comes time to hand it over to your successor.

This is meant to be a legislative hearing, so I hope that some of the discussion today will help guide our thinking about a reauthorization of the S&T Directorate. The Committee on Homeland Security has already reported out a bipartisan reauthorization bill. That bill does a good job of addressing many of the challenges that have been identified over time. As I understand it, the Department provided significant technical assistance in the drafting of that bill, and some of the Department’s own priorities for reauthorization are reflected. If there are any remaining concerns or requests for reauthorization provisions, now is the time for Members of this Committee to hear directly from the Under Secretary. I hope, Dr. Brothers, that we can be a partner with you and not unintentionally place any obstacles in your way as you work hard to build a better and more effective S&T Directorate.

Again, thank you Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing and I yield back the balance of my time.