

STATEMENT OF SENATOR GEORGE V. VOINOVICH
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the
District of Columbia
Hearing on, *DHS' Acquisition Organization: Who is Really in Charge?*
June 7, 2007

Thank you, Chairman Akaka, for holding the Subcommittee's second hearing this Congress on the management challenges facing the Department of Homeland Security.

Too often, Congress fails to recognize the link between agency management and operational success. With a finite amount of resources and an ever-growing demand for homeland security services, it is imperative that the Department employ an effective acquisition management strategy to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent in a cost-effective manner.

In 2005, GAO began reporting on the challenges inherent in the Department's acquisition process. The 2007 GAO High-Risk report found that the Department lacks a unified acquisition organization and faces a shortage of experienced acquisition personnel to manage its \$15.7 billion procurement budget. Senator Akaka and I have spent a considerable amount of our time in the Senate focusing on human capital management and improving the effectiveness of agency programs deemed to be high risk. We understand how critical it is for DHS to have a highly-trained, appropriately staffed acquisition workforce to properly manage its acquisition process. We expect that individuals supporting the acquisition structure will know who is in charge. Mr. Schneider, I am pleased that you recognize these core needs, and look forward to learning more about your plan to ensure they are met.

One deficiency that continues to plague the Department's ability to accomplish its mission is the lack of a Chief Management Officer. The CMO position will become even more important if the immigration bill, currently being debated in the Senate, becomes law. The Department's plan to achieve the benchmarks in the immigration bill currently being debated by the Senate will require the dedication of top-level leadership and considerable resources. That is why I am working on an amendment to ensure the Department consults with this Committee if the immigration bill becomes law.

Mr. Schneider, I remain convinced that elevating your current position to Deputy Secretary for Management and requiring a term appointment will provide the top-level leadership and continuity necessary to meet the current and future management challenges facing the Department. With a department that is top-heavy on political appointees and the pending transition to a new administration, a Chief Management Officer could help provide the broad expertise necessary to sustain key management functions.

As the Department moves forward with major acquisition projects such as *SBI^{net}*, a key component of our efforts to secure the border, I want to be assured DHS has a clear governance structure in place. The structure must clearly define how and when decisions will be made, who will make them, and require performance metrics to measure success. While these

characteristics might seem basic to some, a cursory review of the federal government's acquisition initiatives shows they are too often forgotten.

I am pleased to see that *SBI*net is serving as a pilot for the Acquisition Innovation project, an effort launched by the Partnership for Public Service's Private Sector Council to improve post-award contract management. I encourage the Department to continue to participate in this pilot to aid in the success of *SBI*net and future DHS acquisition projects. As Governor, I know first-hand how important public-private partnerships can be in improving the functioning of our government.

This Committee has a responsibility to ensure the Department has the ability to carry out its mission. Rest assured that I will continue to monitor the acquisition management at the Department.

I look forward to the witnesses' testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.