

Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery by Chair Maggie Hassan
Emerging Threats and Spending Oversight Subcommittee Hearing:
“Lessons Learned: 10 Years Since the Boston Marathon Bombing”
April 26, 2023

Good morning. Last week marked the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attack on the Boston Marathon. We organized today’s hearing to examine how the response to the Boston Marathon bombing impacted emergency preparedness and homeland security in the decade since they occurred, how law enforcement and first responders have improved their planning and response efforts, and what additional actions we may still need to take to secure community events as threats to the homeland emerge and evolve. I am honored to welcome our distinguished witnesses: former Commissioner of the Boston Police Department, Ed Davis; former FEMA Deputy Administrator and former Chief of Boston Emergency Medical Services, Rich Serino; and former state Homeland Security Advisor and former Assistant Director of the FBI, Kerry Sleeper.

Before we begin our discussion, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge and honor the victims of the Boston Marathon bombing and the manhunt that followed. We must never forget the lives that were lost – Krystle Campbell, Lu Lingzi, Martin Richard, Officer Sean Collier, and Sergeant Dennis Simmonds. Our hearts go out to their families and friends. We must also acknowledge the physical and emotional toll that this tragedy has taken on countless individuals and families. Our thoughts remain with all those who were affected by the cowardly attack 10 years ago, and we are deeply grateful for the dedicated efforts of our first responders and law enforcement officials who worked to save lives and bring those responsible to justice.

The Boston Marathon bombing was a senseless act of violence that claimed the lives of three civilians and two law enforcement officers, and injured hundreds more. And it turned a worldwide sporting event, and local celebration of patriotism and pride, into a scene of carnage and mayhem. It was a stark reminder of the ongoing threat of terrorism and the importance of being prepared to respond to emergencies of all kinds. The attack also highlighted the resilience and strength of the Boston and New England community, and the bravery and dedication of our emergency responders and law enforcement officials.

Since the Boston Marathon bombing, we have made significant strides in enhancing our emergency preparedness and counterterrorism efforts. We have improved intelligence sharing and analysis, and invested in training and resources for our emergency responders. We have also invested in resources to strengthen security of what we call soft targets – from community events to NFL games – using shared best practices and funding provided through FEMA’s Nonprofit Security Grant Program. We learned that critical emergency response tools - like tourniquets and priority cellular service for first responders – are necessary to save lives.

As a New Englander, I am proud of the rapid response to the horror of the attack on that day, and last week, on the 10th anniversary of the bombing, I was proud to watch joyful crowds urging on determined race participants. However, there is still much work to do to strengthen our ability to prevent and respond to emerging threats.

Today's hearing is an opportunity to reflect on the progress we have made over the past ten years and identify areas where further improvements can be made. Our distinguished witnesses have a wealth of expertise in emergency management and law enforcement, and I look forward to hearing their insights and recommendations for enhancing our emergency preparedness and counterterrorism efforts. Thank you.