

**Statement of Ranking Member Tom Carper
“Frontline Response to Terrorism in America”**

Tuesday, February 2, 2016

As prepared for delivery:

I would like to thank the Chairman for holding today’s hearing. I would also like to thank our witnesses for being with us today to share their experiences responding to terrorist attacks and other emergencies. I would especially like to recognize Senators Baldwin and Heitkamp for proposing this important and timely hearing and also for their leadership on first responder issues.

Since 9/11, the federal government has worked hard to ensure that those on the frontlines – our police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel – are better prepared to help prevent and respond to terrorist attacks and natural disasters. For example, we have helped local officials develop response plans for mass casualty events. We have also helped train thousands of law enforcement officers. And we have helped build a network of fusion centers to deliver more timely information to our first responders.

Of course, we have also provided grant funding for equipment, personnel, training, and other needs. I am pleased that the spending bill that we just passed in December contains over one billion dollars in grant funding to help states and localities prepare for and respond to terrorist attacks and other disasters.

The recent tragedies in Paris, Boston, Chattanooga and San Bernardino, however, are a stark reminder that we must continue to remain vigilant and ensure as best we can that our first responders are ready for anything that might come their way.

That is why we will be paying close attention next week to the President’s fiscal year 2017 budget request. We need to make sure that it provides the selfless men and women who keep us safe with the resources they need to save lives and stay ahead of the threats we face as a country.

Today’s terrorist threats are very different from those we experienced on 9/11.

Today, we unfortunately know that one or two people with an assault rifle or homemade bomb can create unimaginable havoc and can throw a whole city into turmoil. Cities like New York, Boston, and Washington D.C. have been dealing with terrorist threats for quite some time. But we know that with the help of online radicalization, a terrorist attack can happen anywhere, anytime.

I look forward to hearing from all of our witnesses today about how Congress can further help communities both large and small be better prepared for the type of terrorist attacks we are witnessing today, such as active shooter events.

I would also like to hear about what else we could be doing to stop homegrown extremism, something that I know all of our witnesses are familiar with.

Last December, I introduced legislation to strengthen the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to work with community leaders in identifying and preventing potential homegrown terrorist threats. It is my hope that we can move this legislation soon so that the Department is better equipped to counter the hateful messages put out by ISIS and other terrorist groups.

Again, I would like to thank all of our witnesses for being with us today and for their willingness to share lessons learned on how we can make our country a safer place for us all.