



One Hundred Tenth Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20515

June 10, 2008

The Honorable Michael Chertoff  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

I am writing to you today to inquire about the status of Transportation Worker Identification Card (TWIC) production.

It has come to my attention that eight of the twelve machines used to make TWIC cards have been returned to the manufacturers for repairs and system upgrades. Due to this machinery malfunction, the previous one day time frame for card production has increased to a ten day time period. It is my understanding that card production will not return to normal operational capacity for several weeks.

At this juncture, it is difficult to determine which is more astonishing—the fact that the facility producing these cards is experiencing a 66% machine failure rate or the fact that this machine failure rate has resulted in a ten-fold increase in the card production schedule. As you know, over one million men and women are required to obtain TWICs prior to the April 15, 2009 deadline. Needless to say, every production delay increases the likelihood that this deadline will not be met. It would be both unfortunate and unfair if the necessary activities of these employees and their respective employers are hampered due to avoidable delay in card production.

Due to the serious nature of this issue, please respond in writing to the following by no later than June 13, 2008:

- It is my understanding that TWIC cards are only produced in one facility. In the past five years, during prototype and TWIC card production, how many times have the machines at this facility malfunctioned?
- Is there an alternative location for production when the machines at this facility malfunction? If so, please provide me with information

about this facility. If no alternative site for production exists, please explain the Department's rationale for failing to seek out an alternative site.

- When will the eight machines that are currently offline be repaired and returned to production?
- The fact that two-thirds of the machines have broken down at the same time may indicate that there is a design or operational flaw in the machinery. Has the Department or the contractor taken steps to determine whether such a flaw exists? If so, what steps has the Department or the contractor taken to prevent the recurrence of this malfunction? What steps has the Department or the contractor taken to assure that similar malfunctions will not occur in the remaining machines?
- What is the total value of this production contract? Does the Department of Homeland Security's contract with the card manufacturing facility address the issue of machinery malfunction? If so, does the contract provide for a reduced price when the facility is not fully operational? If not, why not?
- Was the contract to produce cards at this facility a sole source contract? If not, in narrative form, please explain all relevant circumstances surrounding the Department's decision to enter in this contract with this facility.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Denise Krepp, Senior Counsel, Committee on Homeland Security at 202 226-2616.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bennie G. Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "B".

Bennie G. Thompson  
Chairman