

Ranking Member William Keating (D-MA) Opening Statement

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT, INVESTIGATIONS & MANAGEMENT

“Lessons from Fort Hood: Improving our Ability to Connect the Dots”

9:00 a.m., Friday, September 14, 2012

Three years ago, on November 5, 2009, the Nation was shocked by the mass shooting that occurred at the Army deployment center located at Ft. Hood, Texas. During the shooting, thirteen lives were lost, forty-three individuals were wounded and the lives of so many others were forever changed. It later became evident that warning signs existed well before this tragedy and should have, at a minimum, been further investigated.

Both the FBI and the DOD had knowledge of Major Hasan’s potential as a threat to homeland security. The actions leading up to the massacre by Major Nidal Malik Hasan – the sole suspect in the murders– should have unequivocally sparked greater concern.

Yet, dots were not connected, information was not shared, and the lack of formal policies and protocols led to a colossal breakdown in communication.

In December 2009, at the direction of the FBI Director, the Webster Commission was created to examine the events occurring before and after the shootings.

The Final Report of the William H. Webster Commission on the FBI, Counterterrorism Intelligence, and the Events at Fort Hood, Texas which represents the work of the Commission was released in July 2012.

The crucial recommendation mirrored in both the Webster Commission’s report and the 9-11 Commission’s report focused on the importance of information-sharing to our Nation’s security and need to do away with the culture of territorialism that existed between the various levels of federal, state and local authorities.

As a former Massachusetts District Attorney, I was once on the bottom rung of the information-sharing ladder and understand the consequences of inadequate lines of communication.

For this reason, my first legislative measure that was signed into law was an amendment to the Intelligence Authorization that encouraged federal authorities to utilize fusion centers and enlist all of the intelligence capabilities- including that of law enforcement- to secure our homeland.

Since then I have been following the progress of the recommendations set forth by the 9-11 Commission, and now the Webster Commission, in regard to intelligence-sharing and am pleased that the Administration has indicated that effective information sharing and access throughout the government is a top priority. This all being said, I am interested to hear from both witness panels today on their thoughts and their own recommendations.