

Statement of
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Good morning, Chairman Chaffetz, Ranking Member Cummings and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am Jeffery Orner, DHS's Chief Readiness Support Officer, a career civil servant with 35 years of experience in Federal Government, including executive leadership positions at the Department of the Navy, the Coast Guard and DHS headquarters. My office provides policy and oversight of DHS real estate, mobile assets such as vehicles and aircraft, environmental compliance, logistics, and personal property including firearms. Our goal is providing our dedicated workforce nationwide with the operational tools and support they need to keep our nation safe and to be strictly responsible stewards of government resources as we carry out our missions. Today I will discuss how the Department ensures accountability for firearms and ammunition.

DHS is the nation's largest law enforcement agency. Firearms are critical tools for the men and women who perform the Department's various law enforcement missions on the borders, in our cities and in the maritime domain. Any lost firearm is a very serious matter, and my office has placed strict controls and reporting requirements to ensure 100% accountability at all times. The foundations of our

program are personal accountability, rigorous internal controls, and comprehensive data that we use to continually improve the internal controls over the DHS firearms program.

I am pleased to report that DHS has made significant progress in reducing the number of firearms lost each year. Since the Inspector General reported on this issue in 2010, DHS's weapons portfolio has increased by 9%. However, at the same time we have cut our annual firearms losses by 28%. DHS's average annual firearms losses now stand at 69 out of a total inventory of more than 204,000. This represents a loss rate of approximately 3/100^{ths} of 1 percent.

In performing our headquarters role, we have significantly improved the management and oversight of firearms as well as all accountable personal property and sensitive assets through:

- implementing the first DHS-wide Firearms Policy in April 2010, which was updated again in 2013.
- strengthening DHS Management Directive 119-03, *Personal Property Asset Management Program* (June 2012),
- updating the DHS Personal Property Asset Management Manual (September 2013)

Through these governing documents, we established strict accountability procedures that clearly guide how Components are to process lost, damaged, or stolen property including firearms. For example, these procedures require immediate internal notifications as well as external alerts to law enforcement authorities in the event of lost or stolen firearms, law enforcement badges and credentials, or other mission critical assets. Departmental policy also requires Components to establish internal policies to ensure proper accountability, tracking, loss reporting, and safeguarding of all firearms.

In addition to improved policy and procedures, we also enhanced our data systems. Since 2012, Department-wide reporting and tracking of lost, damaged, destroyed, and stolen government property has greatly improved with increased visibility of data. For example, we have moved from a system of manually combining multiple spreadsheets into one form to a real-time database that is updated directly by the operational Components. This enables DHS to monitor compliance with policy and procedures for firearm and other accountable assets through a monthly scorecard measure utilizing standards derived from the American Society for Testing and Materials.

Although it's clear we've made progress in reducing the number of lost and stolen firearms, the loss of any firearm is unacceptable. At the same time, it's important to understand that unlike the military, which generally does not allow its members to take firearms off base and usually stores them in a secure armory, DHS law enforcement personnel are seldom without their weapon. They take them home with them, carry them in their vehicles and employ them in very austere, demanding environments because they are always on call to respond.

An example of one such loss involves a U.S. Border Patrol Officer stationed at the Nogales Station in Arizona, near the southern U.S. border. The Officer's home was burglarized and his service weapon (pistol), which was secured in a CBP issued lock box, was stolen. In this case as in others, it could be surmised that the Officer and his residence were known in the community, thereby making his residence an optimal target for such a theft. Given the environment in which our law enforcement agents operate, it is very difficult to eliminate all losses.

However, when losses occur, the procedure is clear. The officer's supervisor is notified within two hours, as is local law enforcement. This initiates a chain of events leading up to a Report of Survey being completed and a "Lost, Damaged or Destroyed Report" sent to our office where the information is loaded into our data system and incorporated into our scorecard measures which include loss rates,

submission timeliness and adjudication timeframes. Follow-on investigations and any disciplinary actions are determined by each Component.

The Department takes seriously its role as a steward of government resources and we will continue to evaluate our current policies and procedures to identify any areas for improvement.

Thank you for the opportunity to give my opening statement today. I look forward to answering your questions.