

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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Statement of Oversight Subcommittee Chairman Paul Broun (R-Ga.)
Hearing on Technology Needed to Secure America's Border

Chairman Broun: Earlier this month, I traveled to the Southern border of our country with the Homeland Security Committee. We held a field hearing in McAllen, Texas, where we discussed the recent surge of unaccompanied minors crossing the border. I was astounded to learn that the number of children illegally entering the United States from Central America has grown from under 5,000 a year to an estimated 57,000 so far this year. An influx of this extent raises questions about the security of our Southern border. Currently, border patrol agents are inundated with processing unaccompanied minors and not fulfilling their primary mission to safeguard the border against terrorists entering the country under the radar.

In order to protect the nearly 2,000 mile Southwest border, patrol agents would benefit from advances in modern technology such as video monitors, sensors, radars, cameras, thermal-imaging devices, and drones. However, there are many flaws within the various DHS components that conduct technology research and development, which include problems in the management, coordination, and acquisition of items needed to help secure the American border.

A 2012 GAO report notes that, "The Department of Homeland Security does not know the total amount its components invest in research and development and does not have policies and guidance for defining R&D and overseeing R&D resources across the Department." Further, a 2013 GAO report cites examples where projects were delayed and cancelled due to an inability to obtain data from DHS.

This is intolerable. The DHS Science and Technology Directorate states on its own website that it is "the primary research and development arm of the Department of Homeland Security and manages science and technology research, from development through transition, for the Department's operational components and first responders to protect the homeland." How can this primary research and development arm not have any idea of the total amount of taxpayer money being invested on technology to detect, prevent, and mitigate threats to our nation? This is not the prescription to protect our homeland.

As the Chairman of this Committee's Oversight Subcommittee, I value transparency and accountability. The S&T Directorate needs to lay out a clear and comprehensive plan to manage research and development activities, and coordinate with other entities to ensure the deployment of effective state-of-the-art technology in a timely fashion. Absent a strategic technology roadmap, our citizens will remain vulnerable to the threats stemming from an unsecure border.

Thank you again, Chairman Bucshon, for holding this very important hearing, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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