

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson*****The Future of the Registered Traveler Program***

September 30, 2009 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection Subcommittee hearing entitled “The Future of the Registered Traveler Program”:

“This hearing provides stakeholders and Congress with an opportunity to have an important dialogue about expectations and the path forward for the Register Traveler program. I am ready to work with TSA, but I also think it should consider the views of Congress as they were expressed in H.R. 2200.

To the private sector, I want to be sure that a quick closing of business does not happen again. The traveling public deserves better.

Since the closing of Clear’s operations, staff has examined what happened at Clear; what TSA was doing with the RT program; and how the market was responding.

To be sure, things are still in flux. When the Subcommittee sent a letter to Ms. Rossides earlier this summer inquiring about the disposition of Clear’s customer data and TSA’s role in it, TSA essentially washed its hands of any involvement or oversight.

Over the course of the last few months, however, TSA seems much more engaged in the RT program, and that is a welcomed development. I encourage TSA to make no judgments about the future of the RT program until new leadership has time to assess the path forward.

I am thankful to Secretary Napolitano for her response earlier this month to the letter Ranking Member King and I sent to her in August requesting that TSA rescind its order to AAEE demanding that its RT customer information be deleted. This was a clear demonstration that the Secretary wants to keep options open and I look forward to continuing our dialogue.

I look forward to our discussion today and to working with the witnesses to chart a path forward that will provide secure, better, and predictable options for the traveling public.”

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FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Dena Graziano or Adam Comis at (202) 225-9978