"All the News I Feel Like Printing."

VOL.I...No.1

Washington DC

ZERO DOLLARS

Committee Times MARCH 22, 2007

Scientist Begins New Senate If fact, in the last three and half ing, debating, and re-drafting language years, Congress has not passed an Authorization Bill for DHS. Actual money flows to the Department from the Appropriations Committee. This does not deter the staff (on either side of the aisle) from spending long hours drafting, editphysicist at Sandia National Laborato-This February, Matthew Allen, a nuclear engineer by training and staff Job At Congress

ing directly with the minority staff on the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats, The HS Committee actually has six Cybersecurity, and Science and Technology. The ETC Subcommittee (as it is affectionately known) is chaired by the from Rhode Island. The ranking misubcommittees. As the so-called "nuclear fellow" Dr. Allen will be work-Honorable James Langevin, a Democrat nority member is the Honorable Michael for the base bill and amendments. McCaul, Republican from Texas. ries, arrived in Washington D.C. to begin a one year assignment as an ASME Congressional Fellow at the House of Representatives, Homeland Security The HS Committee is chaired by the Honorable Bennie Thompson, a democrat from Missis-

sippi.1 The Honorable Pete King, a Republican from New York, leads the mi-

nority staff.2

(HS) Committee.





Michael McCaul Ranking Mem. (R-TX) James Langevin SubCom. Chair (D-RI)

Dr. Allen will be one of 19 staffers on the minority side-the majority is alloted

Ranking Mem. Pete King (R-NY)

B. Thompson Chairman (D-MS) H.R. 844, the "Promoting Anti-terrorism

Science (PACTS) Act," and H.R. 1401, the security of rail-based transportation.

HS Committee. They recently passed Cooperation through Technology and the Rail Bill - a bill intended to improve Most recently the staff has been very

March has been a busy month for the

threats: the Domestic Nuclear Detection and technology initiatives at the Departnical arm of the HS Committee and has rorism; cybersecurity; other emerging Office (DNDO); the Homeland Security Applied Research Programs Agency (HSARPA); and cross-cutting science The ETC Subcommittee is the techjurisdiction over chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats; agroterment of Homeland Security.

which typically authorizes hundreds of

²Minority Webpage

thorization Bill. The Authorization bill, billions of dollars for DHS, is passed every year by the House but rarely by the

busy drafting the language for the FY08 Department of Homeland Security Au-

HOLDS TWO HEARINGS ETC SUBCOMMITTEE WITH DNDO

In the month of March the ETC Subcommittee held two hearings that directly related to the oversight of the



Director DNDO Vayl Oxford

primary witness in

both hearings.

The first hearing (held on March current generation RPMs and the price of Portals. The second hearing (held on ernment Accountability Office (GAO). The GAO issued a report highlighting concerns with the cost-benefit analysis DNDO conducted to justify the acquisition of next generation radiation portal monitors (RPMs). Cheif among these concerns was the price DNDO listed for next generation Advanced Spectroscopic March 21) focused on DNDO's radiation examined studies from the Gov. portal monitor deployment strategy.

DNDO's plan to go forward with he deployment of hundreds of new Advanced Spectroscopic Portals (ASPs) figured prominently at both hearings. The final (potentially \$1 Billion) contract for procurement of ASP systems has not been granted. Tests currently underway at the Nevada Test Site are meant to compare current technology with the bility of three commercial companies to meet the required goals of detection and new systems and demonstrate the capaidentification of radioactive materials

Life on the Hill

The First Four Weeks

By MATTHEW ALLEN

I've had my first exposure to both hear-The first four weeks have been a real learning experience. In the past month, ings and markups.

amendments were passed unanimously, der five pages-I've never made it. To markup, we must submit report language for the record. Report language (as I understand it) is essentially the bers. Each subcommittee drafts amendmeaning of a law or what the framers had supported by Mr. McCaul. with bipartisan support. open to the public and serve as the main the hearing topic and produces the heardate my shortest is 10 pages, but I am improving—my last memo included no hearing are finalized, the staff researches A hearing is held to inform Members of Congress of anything within their committee's jurisdiction. Hearings are tool of oversight—typically involving for Congressional committee staff. One of the first things required for a hearing is witnesses, typically picked by the majority staff with input from the minority. Once the witnesses and the date of the ing memo. My subcommittee staff director, Dr. Diane Berry, has a standing promise to buy lunch for anyone that can produce a hearing memo that's untestimony from federal agencies. They are also an enormous amount of work equations or extraneous math. generally only seen by lawyers who refer back to the report language of this or In addition to preparing for hearings and markups, briefings are a daily occurrence. Briefings can be split into licited. Solicited briefings are generally two large categories: solicited and unsoheld because the staff needs more inforthat law during litigation. has spent large amounts of time drafting,

ford, the director of DNDO, visits our We are also briefed by other offices within DHS, such as John Vitko's office within the S&T directorate, or Matthew mation to go forward with drafting laws or amendments. For example, Vayl Oxstaff more than once a month. I personally call his office at least twice a week. Clark's office in charge of Homeland Security Centers of Excellence. revising, and debating, are often gleefully ignored by the Members. At the end of every hearing, we submit Ques-This month I also went through my first "markup." A markup is a public event where the majority and minority parties come together and debate and tions For the Record. These are questions Members ask the witnesses to look into and get back to the committee.

teresting or informational and basically a total waste of time. In my first week our And then there are the unsolicited tions that want to share with the committee the great things they're doing for the nation. They tend to range from very interesting and informational, to entertaining but not so informational, to not insubcommittee was briefed by: the director of the Naval Research Lab, the director of DNDO, the director of Los Alamos Nuc Adviser to the Prime Minister of briefings. These are given by companies, government agencies, or other institu-National Lab, and the Chem-Bio-Rad-Australia. That was a fun week! amend a bill—first at the subcommittee and then at the full committee level. The Rail Bill (actually begun last Congress) was marked up on March 8th at the full committee level. As part of the minority staff, we work on amendments to the bill introduced by the majority. Amendments are drafted at the committee level and then circulated to committee memments in their jurisdiction, typically to be supported by their ranking subcommittee member. My subcommittee worked on four amendments, which were then All four

After an amendment is passed at the seems to be a plethora of companies and academic institutions that feel with proper funding they could develop a softgence agencies. Let me get my check-And then there are the others. There ware package that can model terrorism, disaster mitigation, and solve all the interoperability problems between law enforcement, first responders, and intelliin mind when the law was drafted. It is

Although the legislative process is very exciting and educational, I'm really looking forward to Congressional Recess in April.

POINTS OF INTEREST

- My next report will discuss the various technology related issues the Lab should be aware of in the Rail Bill and the FY08 Authorization Bill.
- Looking ahead: There will be a hearing on April 18 for BioShield, and April 19 for Cyber-security. If you're in DC, it may be worth stopping by.



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Background information must be extensively researched because the onus is questions to members for them to ask the on the staff to be prepared for any question that might arise during the hearing. It is also the role of the staff to provide

ence to observe that rigorously written hearing memos and questions the staff witnesses. It's been a learning experi-