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March 1, 2007

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

Since the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the subsequent announcement the department would be responsible for the United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology Program (US-VISIT), I have made it a priority to oversee the program's progress – from conception to implementation. I have long emphasized that protecting the United States does not rest solely with the physical infrastructure at our borders. A properly functioning border means information is collected at each point of contact and the correct information is available at each point of decision – whether that point is a consular window overseas or a car window at the border in California. We must have a seamless approach – ensuring security at *all* ports of entry. This is why US-VISIT is essential to the mission of homeland security.

In addition to the security aspects of US-VISIT, the program is particularly important to Virginia's 11th District. Approximately, one out of every six of my constituents was born outside of the United States. Accordingly, there is in a high volume of international travel to and from the National Capital Region. Residents need US-VISIT to work in order to protect the region. However, residents also need the assurance US-VISIT will not clog the ports of entry and impede and lengthen airport security procedures at high volume times. I believe DHS has struck an appropriate balance between these two goals, but we still have additional ground to cover with the program.

The President's budget proposal requested \$462 million for US-VISIT in 2008. It is my strong desire this money be used by DHS to establish a workable exit phase of the program, which is critical to detecting significant visa overstays. The money should also facilitate the implementation of a 10 fingerprint biometric. This new technology will be invaluable in identifying previously unidentifiable partial fingerprints.

While I am encouraged by the progress of US-VISIT, I have questions regarding the current state of the program and the improvements to be made over the coming year. Therefore, in an effort to further assist my oversight efforts, I request DHS provide the following information by March 15, 2006:

1. On July 17, 2006, I sent you a letter requesting to review the US-VISIT strategic plan required by the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-558). Pursuant to the law, DHS was instructed to have the plan completed by June 2005.
 - a. If the strategic plan is complete, I request a copy for my review.
 - b. If the strategic plan is not complete, I request a timeframe for completion.
2. Provide a status report, including a timeframe on implementation, on the move from the 2 to 10 fingerprint technology;
3. In order for US-VISIT to work as intended, DHS must coordinate with federal, state, and local government agencies. Provide specifics as to how DHS is coordinating information sharing with the following:
 - a. U.S. Department of State;
 - b. U.S. Department of Justice; and
 - c. State and local law enforcement agencies.
4. Understanding how the US-VISIT program has enhanced the security of the United States is vital to recognizing the merits of further funding and expanded implementation. Provide the following statistics regarding the program, with a date of their accuracy:
 - a. the number of individuals with outstanding criminal warrants detained;
 - b. the number of individuals deported; and
 - c. the number of individuals denied entry into the United States.

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
March 1, 2007
Page 2

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact [REDACTED] [REDACTED] at (202) 225-5074. In addition, I ask that you make your staff available to brief Committee staff on these issues at such time that is requested.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Davis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom Davis
Ranking Republican Member

cc: Chairman Henry A. Waxman