

*News from*  
**Congressman Christopher Carney**  
*Representing Northeast and Central Pennsylvania*

---

*For release: November 13, 2007*

*Contact: Rebecca Gale, 202 225 3731*

*Rebecca.Gale@mail.house.gov*

**CARNEY STATEMENT FOR HOMELAND SECURITY  
RECRUITING, HIRING, AND PROMOTING VETS HEARING**

**Washington, D.C.**--Congressman Christopher P. Carney, Chairman of the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Management, Investigations and Oversight, issued the following opening statement for the Subcommittee hearing, "Examining the Department of Homeland Security's Efforts to Recruit, Hire, and Promote Veterans":

"Thanks for joining us today. Due to some unforeseen events that came up on the calendar of the full committee over the last few weeks, we've had to push this hearing back a couple times; I'm glad we're finally holding it, especially having just observed Veterans Day.

"I'd like to thank Mr. Rogers for his cooperation in holding today's hearing.

"As this session winds down, there's certainly been no shortage of partisanship on the House floor. I'm glad that our subcommittee and committee have been able to get past all of that and continue to examine issues affecting the Department of Homeland Security.

"Thanks also to all of our witnesses for submitting their testimony on time, especially to Ms. Perez. I'm hopeful that this is a turning point for DHS and a sign of things to come from the Department.

"In fact, while our committee has had countless hearings on DHS shortcomings, hiring of veterans at DHS is an area where the Department seems to be on the right track.

"As I mentioned a few moments ago, this past Sunday we honored those who have served our nation. Over the years, Congress has seen fit to ensure that there are laws in place to give vets an advantage when it comes both to applying for and being hired for federal jobs.

"Generally, I'm pleased to see that DHS has been proactive in recruiting vets. Just last week, the Department convened the first meeting of its Veterans Advisory Council, comprised of key veterans service organizations. While the American Legion has expressed concern over DHS' efforts in general, and the Legion did not participate in last week's meeting, feedback from other groups has been positive. These groups have long assisted vets in finding their way back into federal service.

"Aside from the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Air Force, Army, and Navy, the Departments of Transportation and Homeland Security are atop the list of

federal agencies with a percentage of their workforce being comprised of vets. As of last week, DHS has almost 40,500 veterans on payroll.

"This year alone, the Department has hired over 6,000 vets, twice as many as it hired in 2006 and four times as many as it hired in 2005. This is obviously good news, both for DHS and for vets.

"That said, I worry about massive retirements that our federal workforce will endure over the next decade. Over 60% of federal employees will be eligible to retire over the next ten years.

"The Department must do everything it can to stay competitive with other federal agencies when recruiting, retaining, and promoting veterans. Their unquestionable service ethic makes them ideal federal employees. It's of the utmost importance that DHS leverages their experience, dedication, and training to strengthen the Department.

"While vets traditionally have strong ties with the VA, DoD, or the various services, DHS is in a unique position to utilize skills that these former soldiers, seamen, airmen, and Marines honed while serving.

"To borrow an old recruiting phrase from the Army, is the Department "being all it can be" when it comes to matching skills of veterans to new careers with DHS?

"TSA sees attrition rates of roughly 15%. Surely there are veterans with comparable skills who can come in with little or no additional training, fill these vacancies, and stick around long enough to right some of the wrongs that are driving screeners away.

"Also, is the Department looking to utilize the unique intelligence analysis and translation skills of vets to augment it's existing intelligence functions?

"There are any number of areas where the skills of veterans could easily pair up with DHS job requirements.

"I think we all just want to ensure the Department isn't overlooking any of these qualified, already trained vets and instead hiring more costly private contractors to fill the positions.

"This means that in addition to DHS recruiters continuing to work at military hospitals and the Department working with the various VSOs through the Veterans Advisory Council, that DHS also expand recruiting to transition centers, where veterans are first put in touch with civil service opportunities. Even though these vets are often in a hurry to get through the transition centers' doors, any contact with DHS is better than nothing.

"I look forward to hearing what has been working, what hasn't worked, and what is planned for the future to ensure DHS' success in recruitment and retention of these uniquely qualified and dedicated Americans."

###