

I would also note that DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano has been pleading with the Senate to confirm Dr. O'Toole. Secretary Napolitano has said that Dr. O'Toole's biosecurity and epidemiology expertise are critical to DHS and to her, personally. The Secretary's urgency is heightened because of the critical roles Dr. O'Toole will play in both defending our Nation against bioterrorism and in the continuing preparations for the H1N1 flu pandemic.

Let's consider the tough job Dr. O'Toole has been asked to take on and then consider the qualifications she brings to it.

The Science and Technology Directorate is charged with managing our Nation's investments in homeland security research and development projects with the goal of providing its customers within and without the DHS the kinds of state-of-the-art technologies they need to achieve their missions.

The S&T Directorate got off to a rocky start and struggled in its early years to clarify and execute its primary mission. Former Under Secretary Jay M. Cohen resolved to build a leaner and more tightly managed organization that focused on better serving its customers and being transparent with Congress. He implemented internal controls to monitor S&T finances and track the progress of S&T investments. He established a structured strategic planning process that is designed to produce specific objectives and annual performance measures.

But despite this progress, big challenges await the new undersecretary, including expanding investments in innovative R&D for homeland security—like the advanced spectroscopic portal, ASP, and the secure border initiative—and insuring the reliability of the a testing and evaluation that DHS relies on for large acquisition programs.

Programs like these can be force multipliers for DHS's customers within and without the department.

Now let's consider the resume Dr. O'Toole brings to the job—both as a medical professional and as a manager.

Let's start with Dr. O'Toole's solid and impressive educational background: a bachelor's degree from Vas-sar College, a medical degree from George Washington University, and a master of public health degree from Johns Hopkins University.

Now let's consider her management skills: From 1989 to 1993 she served as a senior analyst and project director with the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment; from 1993 to 1997, she served as the Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health at the Department of Energy.

From 1999 to 2003, she managed the Johns Hopkins Center for Civilian Bio-defense Strategies. For the last 6 years, she has served as the Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Center for Biosecurity at the University of Pittsburgh.

On top of all this, Dr. O'Toole is also an accomplished author.

She has published her research on anthrax, smallpox, the plague, biological attacks, containment of contagious disease epidemics, biodefense, and hospital preparedness. She is coeditor in chief of the *Journal of Biosecurity and Bioterrorism*.

And she took all this knowledge she has gained over these many years and used it to help create the 2001 bio-terror attack simulation known as "Operation Dark Winter" that helped open our eyes to our many vulnerabilities.

Dr. O'Toole is also a former chair of the board of the Federation of American Scientists and she has participated in major studies or advisory panels at the request of the National Science Foundation, the Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Homeland Security.

Besides these many qualifications, another important measure of her fitness for this post is the bipartisan respect she has earned across the government and scientific communities that monitor homeland security and bioterrorism challenges.

Among her many supporters are: Former Senators Bob Graham and Jim Talent, Chairman and Cochairman of the Commission on the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism; former DHS Secretary Tom Ridge; former Senator and defense expert Sam Nunn; former National Security Adviser to Presidents Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush, Brent Scowcroft, as well as Dr. Robert P. Kadlec, former Special Assistant for Biodefense Policy at the Homeland Security Council under President Bush; Dr. D.A. Henderson, who led the World Health Organization's efforts to rid the world of smallpox, and the Federation of American Scientists.

Dr. O'Toole brings a remarkable breadth of experience to this job that is so crucial to our nation's security and I say again she is an inspired choice and I urge my 3 colleagues to take up her nomination and confirm her to this position where our nation so desperately needs her talents.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Tara Jeanne O'Toole, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary for Science and Technology, Department of Homeland Security?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now return to legislative session.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the next hour be controlled by the Democratic side; that colloquies be allowed among the speakers; and that the speakers be recognized, first, the Senator from New Jersey, Mr. LAUTENBERG, then the Senator from Oregon, Mr. MERKLEY, and then as recognition may be sought on the Democratic side after that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. One further unanimous consent request, Mr. President. I ask unanimous consent that Senator STABENOW follow Senator MERKLEY after Senator LAUTENBERG has spoken.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues for giving me an opportunity to talk for a few minutes about health care as we try to understand what brings us to this point with a shred of rage, trying to maintain the dignity of our society.

We are on the verge of fixing our health care system once and for all, but there is one major obstacle in our way. The obstacle I talk about is the health insurance companies, their lobbyists, CEOs, and their friends on the other side of the aisle. We can call this group the status quo caucus. They are spending unlimited funds on TV commercials and bogus studies to kill health reform. That is their mission. Think about it. They define their goal, their objective, as articulated by our colleague from South Carolina, as saying: If we can stop this health care reform from continuing, it can be the end of the Obama Presidency, it can be his Waterloo.

What kind of an objective is that, that we put politics at the top end as we ignore millions of people, over 40 million people who do not have any insurance, and many of the others who do