

COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND  
TECHNOLOGY**  
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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**Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)**  
Hearing on Technology Needed to Secure America's Border

**Chairman Smith:** Thank you, Chairman Bucshon for holding this hearing. We all are aware of the impact of illegal immigrant children who stream across our Southern border. This is both a national security and a humanitarian crisis that we cannot allow to continue. A country that has lost control of its borders has lost control of its future.

The President has ignored, failed to enforce, undermined, and unilaterally changed current immigration laws. As a result, millions of young people have risked their lives to make the dangerous trip and come here illegally.

Further, the Administration has yet to present a plan to secure our nation's borders. As border agents are forced to turn increased attention to the surge of minors concentrated in certain areas along the border, it leaves much of the rest of the border unprotected.

Technology is a key component to securing our 2,000 mile Southern border. Customs and Border Protection and National Guard troops cannot be everywhere.

Sensors deployed along the border can detect and track the "coyotes" who smuggle children—as well as illegal drugs and firearms—across the border. Sensors will help Border Patrol agents know where coyotes are so that they can intercept and stop them. And ground-penetrating radar can find buried tunnels that crisscross our border.

We need to get this technology in the hands of our immigration officers. Unfortunately, the Department of Homeland Security has a poor track record when it comes to developing and fielding sensors and tactical communications infrastructure along the Southwest border.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) finds the Department of Homeland Security's research and development (R&D) efforts to be "fragmented and overlapping."

The Department's Science and Technology Directorate will spend \$1.2 billion this year on numerous projects, some related to border security, but many are not. As in previous years, the GAO found hundreds of millions of dollars being spent each year on duplicative R&D projects by other offices within the department.

Frankly, no one knows who's in charge of research and development, or what the goal is. The GAO reports that the Science and Technology Directorate lost touch with its end-users about what technologies and R&D projects should be a priority.

Today's witnesses will testify on the need for the Department of Homeland Security to develop a plan to secure America's borders and how best to carry out that plan. Research and technology are key components to securing America's borders.

In September, we will hear from the Department of Homeland Security Undersecretary for Science and Technology—a position created by this Committee in founding the department—in a joint hearing with the Homeland Security Committee.

We are working with them on draft legislation to set priorities for the Science and Technology Directorate on how to secure America's borders.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in the weeks ahead to turn this goal into a reality. While there may be mixed feelings about the current situation on our Southern border, we should all be able to agree that we can – and we must – secure America's borders with the help of technology.

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