

Congresswoman Candice S. Miller

Opening Statement

Committee on Government Reform

Subcommittee on Technology, Information Policy, Intergovernmental Relations, and the Census

May 20, 2003

OPENING STATEMENT

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As we begin the third Subcommittee hearing on factual data analysis, the issue of privacy protection becomes exceedingly important. In previous hearings, we heard testimony from representatives of the Department of Defense, the Transportation Security Administration, and the FBI insisting that the privacy of citizens will not be compromised and that those agencies are very sensitive to concerns raised about invasion of personal privacy by government.

In the written testimony submitted for this hearing by Mr. Rosenzweig, he states, “Fundamental legal principles and conceptions of American government should guide the configuration of our intelligence and law enforcement efforts rather than the reverse.”

One of the hallowed principles of our American system is that we, the people, determine what the government can and should do – not the other way around.

This Subcommittee has primary oversight of the technology initiatives of the Federal government. And as federal agencies begin to integrate and streamline information technologies, it is important that the processes associated with Federal actions remain transparent so that the confidence of the American people is not lost. We find ourselves in a highly salient national debate concerning the balance between national security and personal privacy.

Factual data analysis is a tool that will better enable Local, State, and Federal officials to secure the homefront from terror attacks. Because of the power and the breadth of capabilities associated with this tool, both now and in the future, high scrutiny of its implementation is required.

Mr. Cohen, in his written testimony, has cited instances where the potential for abuse of factual data analysis will be ever-present. But potential abuse exists currently at all levels of government activity. Hopefully through the work of this Subcommittee, we can help Americans view the implementation of improved data mining techniques and its homeland security benefits with cautious optimism and not with fear.

I am confident that the rights of American citizens outlined by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights will not be subverted in the auspices of national security.

I want to thank Mr. Rozenweig, Mr. Steinhardt, and Mr. Cohen for testifying today. I look forward to working with each of you as this Subcommittee oversees the implementation of factual data analysis by various Federal agencies.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.