

Castle Participates in Hearing on U.S. Port Security, Port of Wilmington Testifies about New Security

Camden, N.J. -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle today took part in a Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee field hearing regarding U.S. port security. Castle, along with other local U.S. representatives, received a national and local update on the status of the Department of Homeland Security's National Strategy for Maritime Security.

Castle used his time to focus on the 9/11 Commission report's recommendations calling for increased port security, the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program being tested at the Port of Wilmington, and the importance of increased security initiatives at foreign ports that load cargo coming into the United States. In particular, William Boles from the Port of Wilmington discussed challenges for the TWIC program and the importance of setting a timeline for moving from testing to implementation.

"The 9/11 Commission identified container and cargo ships as one area of seaport security most vulnerable to terrorist infiltration. This presents a serious security problem since most foreign countries are far behind the U.S. in terms of maritime security," Castle said.

"Just as the international community needs to step-up and participate in improving maritime security, so to do federal, state, and local governments here at home. One key lesson learned from the mass confusion of September 11th and Hurricane Katrina is that our government has a significant information-sharing problem. This is true for the intelligence community and it is true for maritime security. From the TSA down to state and local security personnel, timely information-sharing and communication with private industry is crucial to improving our ability to accurately identify and respond to threats. Today's hearing is an important part of that process."

There were two panels of experts who testified at the hearing. The first panel included Rear Admiral Craig T. Bone, Director of Port Security at the U.S. Coast Guard, and an official from the Transportation Security Administration. The second panel consisted of William Boles, Director of Security at the Port of Wilmington, Lisa Humber, Vice President of the Maritime Exchange for DE River and Bay, and Dr. Scott Glenn, a Rutgers University Professor at the Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences.