Hello! I'm U. S. Senator Roger Wicker from Mississippi.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you virtually. As ranking member of the Senate Commerce Committee, part of my job is to oversee the Department of Commerce - its goals, personnel, and activities.

As you all know, the Commerce Department's internal security office known as the Investigations and Threat Management Service or ITMS has been and remains the subject of great concern.

For over a year, I've been leading an investigation to this outfit based on a number of credible whistleblower claims alleging gross misconduct and illegal activity. For almost a decade, ITMS carried out law enforcement and counterintelligence activities that were well outside their lawful authority. These activities were often conducted without any sufficient factual basis, and they seem to be motivated by the goal of exaggerating their own security capabilities. In other words, ITMS went rogue.

You are familiar with the story of Sherry Chen, who was wrongfully targeted and had her life upended by charges stemming from ITMS. Unfortunately, she's not alone. There have been others like her. Lives and careers have been ruined without just cause. My investigation has found more than enough evidence indicating ITMS acted outside the law on multiple occasions.

I also regret to say that at least two of the whistleblowers who brought ITMS's conduct to our attention have suffered retaliation. Both lost their jobs in January of this year. Such egregious actions send a chilling message to future whistleblowers who are crucial to keeping our government accountable.

Over the past year, Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo has taken some important steps in the right direction. Most importantly, she has disbanded ITMS and increased her own oversight of department security investigations. Throughout this reform process, I've continued to conduct close oversight of the Commerce Department. Some former ITMS employees are still working at the Department, and we need to make sure these abuses are not repeated in a different setting. I'm also pushing for the Commerce Department's Inspector General to be held accountable, given her failure to investigate on ITMS properly for over 4 years.

I want to thank all of you for the role you've played in advocating for the victims. You have been a critical voice in this process. With your continuous advocacy, we will ensure that justice is served, and that our government stays accountable.