

July 23, 2024 – Kumar Kibble Opening Statement
“Reckless Disregard: How DHS’s Failure to Collect DNA at the Border Endangers Americans.”

Mr. Grassley and Senators, thank you very much for inviting me today.

My name is Kumar Kibble and I retired from ICE after more than 24 years of service, including as deputy director of the agency. Following my retirement, I worked for a company that pioneered Rapid DNA technology. I led efforts in collaboration with DHS to demonstrate how Rapid DNA enables more secure borders, including determining kinship to identify fraudulent family units and to catch human traffickers. To be clear, I stopped working at that company more than four years ago, and I have no financial interest or affiliation with it today.

With today’s roundtable, I think you have zeroed in on a border security issue that can actually be fixed. It can address one of our most significant challenges – stopping more people from coming into our country who represent known, true threats. I’m looking forward to your questions, but I want to briefly put into plain English the issue we’re discussing here.

Today, as you know, personnel along the border collect DNA samples from individuals in custody, stick the samples in a pouch, and mail them to the FBI’s lab in Quantico. Those samples have piled up in a gigantic backlog, and by the time they are processed, the people from whom they were collected are long gone. If those people pose a threat, the opportunity to further detain or return them has passed.

It does not have to be like this. Instead, proven technology and processes exist that enable rapid processing of DNA samples within 90 minutes and these samples can be processed in the field, very close to where they are collected at the border. We can and should be getting DNA profile results while individuals are still in custody. By implementing Rapid DNA testing, we provide our border officials with the necessary information to make informed decisions, ensuring that those who pose a threat are apprehended and those in genuine need of asylum are protected.

The money you are spending today on DNA analysis would still be spent, but it would be spent in a way that achieves border security missions much more effectively and prevents backlogs.

I am a firm believer in this technology and I have witnessed its effectiveness. I know that if we implement it across the border, our personnel will stop far more individuals presenting human trafficking, child exploitation, national security and public safety threats, than we are currently able to stop today.

Mr. Grassley, in my expert opinion this is a non-controversial border security imperative that simply accelerates the current slow and ineffective DNA collection and analysis process that is currently in place. Thank you.