

**RANKING MEMBER ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS
OPENING STATEMENT
COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2011**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for recognizing me. And let me start by congratulating you on your chairmanship.

You are one of the hardest working Members of Congress. I mean that. I've seen that. And every one of us wishes you well in making our government more effective and efficient.

As Chairman, you represent each and every one of us sitting here today.

You are now our Chairman. You are this Committee's leader, and its chief spokesman. Your words carry the official imprint of the Committee, and your actions carry great weight and authority.

I know we will have our disagreements. In fact, we'll discuss some serious concerns I have today regarding subpoenas and access to documents.

But let me say this. Before I took this position as Ranking Member, I served as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation on the Transportation Committee, where I conducted strong, bipartisan oversight.

For example, I worked with the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Full Committee on Transportation as well as my Subcommittee Ranking Member to hold extensive hearings on the multi-billion "Deepwater" acquisitions, which sadly had been marred by hundreds of millions of dollars in failed acquisitions.

Together, we also authored the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010—the first Coast Guard authorization to be passed by Congress in four years.

I note that several portions of that legislation were considered individually in the House and passed without opposition.

The overall Authorization Act passed the House by a vote of 385-11 – and the final version that we resolved with the Senate passed the House by unanimous consent.

It didn't matter to me who was in the White House. I sought out solutions, and I achieved them working in close concert with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and in both chambers.

So I was especially humbled when the Coast Guard announced last month that they were honoring me with the Bertholf Award.

They present this award each year to a Member of Congress who demonstrates long-term vision and leadership, and who makes substantial contributions to the men and women of the United States Coast Guard.

I sincerely hope that you and I can work together in this same bipartisan and constructive way.

And I commit that if I do disagree with you, I will do so respectfully, always with the primary goal of working out a solution that serves both of our interests.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and at the appropriate time, I would like to raise a number of specific issues relating to the proposed rules.

Documents and Links

[Amendment #1 \(.pdf\)](#)

[Amendment #2 \(.pdf\)](#)

[Cummings' Remarks on Amendment #1](#)

[Cummings' Remarks on Amendment #2](#)