

WASHINGTON (February 5) – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) issued the following statement on today’s House Judiciary Committee titled “America’s Immigration System: Opportunities for Legal Immigration and Enforcement of Laws Against Illegal Immigration.”

The hearing was the first to be called by the committee on potential legislative changes to the U.S. immigration system. Congressman Bachus has rejoined the committee as a voting member and holds a subcommittee chairmanship.

Congressman Bachus said, “Chairman Goodlatte conducted an informative hearing that allowed many diverse views to be heard and it was a good starting point for discussions on possible immigration reforms. Immigration is part of America’s heritage, but the enforcement must be right and we heard that is certainly not the case with current border security. One issue I raised was having immigration policy put a greater focus on admitting highly-skilled workers who could add to our economy. We have found that after receiving advanced scientific and technology training at institutions like the University of Alabama at Birmingham, some students who might want to stay in the U.S. and benefit our economy end up reluctantly returning to their native countries and competing against us. This is an example of a reform that could be considered on a separate and faster track. We ought not to let more contentious issues like citizenship for illegal immigrants and the idea of comprehensive reform prevent us from making other changes needed to our immigration laws.

“In addition, we heard disturbing testimony from a union president representing agents with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) that directions have been given preventing the arrest and deportation of certain individuals who are in the U.S. illegally or who have overstayed their visas. Word spreads quickly when laws are not enforced and this compromises the safety of all of our citizens,” Congressman Bachus stated.