



News Release

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TASKFORCE RATES “HITS” AND “MISSES” IN HOMELAND SECURITY PROPOSALS

WASHINGTON, DC – The Republican Study Committee’s Security First Taskforce, Chaired by Congressman Mike Pence (R-IN), today rated some of the proposals of the House Committees tasked with making recommendations to the Ad Hoc Committee on Homeland Security for the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The Taskforce based its evaluation on whether the Committees’ proposals hit or missed the following criteria: Does the proposal or policy... 1) improve homeland security; 2) remain flexible and accountable; 3) refrain from creating excessive new bureaucracy; 4) hold the line on unnecessary spending not related to homeland security; and 5) respect the civil rights of American citizens.

MISSES

- **The Appropriations Committee’s proposal to deny the President’s request for flexibility in allocating five percent of DHS’s budget.** The President asked Congress to give DHS the freedom to transfer a mere five cents of any dollar, if necessary, between appropriated accounts. The Appropriations Committee denied this request. In the war on terrorism, any president will need the ability to move resources to meet threats.
- **The Government Reform Committee’s provision tying the hands of the President in dealing with civil servants.** This amendment deprives the President of the flexibility to waive civil service rules and regulations necessary to shift Homeland Security responsibilities and personnel quickly. Congress must ensure that DHS can manage its personnel with the flexibility needed to meet immediate threats. Homeland Security should be about protecting America, not about protecting unions and collective bargaining.
- **The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee’s decision to remove the Coast Guard from DHS.** The Coast Guard, as its name implies, guards America’s coasts. Since a future terrorist attack could come from the sea, it is vital that the Coast Guard be brought under the umbrella of Homeland Security.

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- **The Ways and Means Committee’s proposal to prevent DHS from changing any portion of the Customs Service under DHS authority.** Ways and Means places all but the revenue functions of Customs under DHS, but prevents DHS from making any changes to Customs’ staff, structure, funding and offices. Congress must not constrain DHS as it seeks to regulate potentially dangerous imports into this country.
- **The Government Reform Committee’s provision permitting the federal government to assume the legal liability of private contractors whose technologies and services are used in anti-terrorism efforts.** This provision, which is only minimally restricted, makes the federal government an insurer for an entire sector of the U.S. economy! This is not only costly but also fails to address the need for tort reform and limits on liability in our overly litigious society.

HITS

- **The Intelligence Committee’s provision detailing intelligence experts (from the CIA, FBI, DIA, etc.) to the Department of Homeland Security.** This will ensure not only that DHS communicates, cooperates, and shares information with the rest of the intelligence community, but also that DHS employees have access to the nation’s leading intelligence experts.
- **The Judiciary Committee’s decision to split the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).** INS reform is long overdue. The enforcement portion of the INS should fall under DHS’s jurisdiction, while the service portion of the INS should remain under the Department of Justice, just as the Judiciary Committee has recommended.
- **The Judiciary Committee’s provisions for protecting civil rights.** Fighting terrorism should not mean giving up civil liberties. We fight terrorism to preserve our civil liberties. The Deputy Inspector General for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties created under the Judiciary Committee’s recommendation will be the first and best line of defense against any civil rights violations. The Judiciary Committee also prohibits development of a national ID card, which would subject innocent Americans to further encroachment upon their privacy.
- **The Energy and Commerce Committee’s provisions establishing standards for security at federal civilian research facilities.** Facilities covered under this provision conduct chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear research and development. The Energy and Commerce Committee takes steps to safeguard targets throughout the country because it recognizes that terrorists may attempt to obtain dangerous materials from these facilities or attack them to create a large-scale disaster.
- **The Government Reform Committee’s provision leaving primary responsibility for investigating and prosecuting terrorism with the appropriate law enforcement agencies.** This provision recognizes that the federal government and the new DHS are not always best equipped to conduct every investigation or prosecution. Sometimes, state and local authorities may be better suited to investigate and prosecute individual acts of terrorism.

The Taskforce will release additional information on the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, as appropriate.