



# House Select Committee on Homeland Security **Democrats**

**JIM TURNER, Ranking Member**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Turner to Ridge: Why Disband Independent Task Force Critical of US- VISIT?**

In continued oversight of the DHS US-VISIT program, Congressman Jim Turner, Ranking Democrat on the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, released the following letter to Secretary Tom Ridge requesting information about the cancellation of the DMIA Task Force--charged with reviewing the entry-exit system.

The Data Management Improvement Act Task Force found that insufficient technologies prevented US-VISIT from meeting the needs of a post-September 11 world.

Despite the fact that the DMIA had a lengthy research agenda for 2004 as well as staff and budget through the end of the year, the Task Force abruptly disbanded in January 2004, after issuing a report stressing the need for investments in interoperability and an independent assessment of US-VISIT. DMIA was authorized by Congress to provide oversight through 2008.

Ongoing investigations found that the \$10 billion US-VISIT program fails to provide interoperability between databases at various government agencies as was intended by Congress when it called for the development of a comprehensive entry-exit system. Instead, the Department of Homeland Security changed course in April 2003 and deployed a combination of old border security systems, at airports and seaports, and renamed them US-VISIT.

Turner has requested that the Department provide the Committee with documentation of the decision to change course, and to provide a detailed plan for achieving interoperability of databases.

The letter follows a letter sent by Turner earlier this week outlining the findings of the staff investigation.

**TURNER LETTER TO RIDGE ATTACHED**

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