

Tauscher, Spratt Introduce Legislation to Reform Weapon Systems Acquisition Process

WASHINGTON

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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April 1, 2009

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The bill would reform our defense acquisition programs to avoid unreasonable cost and schedule estimates, unrealistic performance expectations, and technology flaws, to hold down costs and reduce delays.

Senate Armed Services Committee Chair Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) introduced the same bill in the Senate last month.

"Our acquisition and contracting processes too often result in cost overruns and delays," Rep. Tauscher said. "At a time when we are trying to restore the economy and find ways to reduce spending, or spend more efficiently, we have to rework how the Pentagon awards and monitors contracts."

"There's huge room for improvement in defense procurement," Spratt said. "Our bill does not pretend to be a panacea, but it offers some solid, well considered ideas, which have been carefully researched. It's a good piece of work, and I am glad to sponsor it along with Senators Levin and McCain, and my colleague in the House, Rep. Ellen Tauscher."

Earlier this year at the White House Fiscal Responsibility Summit, Tauscher discussed acquisition issues with Sens. Levin and McCain, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and other senior lawmakers and members of the Obama administration.

The Weapon Systems Acquisition Reform Act of 2009 contains provisions that would:

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Address
problems with unreasonable performance requirements by requiring DOD to reestablish systems engineering organizations and developmental testing capabilities; make trade-offs between cost, schedule and performance early in the program cycle; and conduct preliminary design reviews before giving approval to new acquisition programs;

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Address
problems with unreasonable cost and schedule estimates by establishing a new, independent director of cost assessment to ensure that unbiased data is available for senior DOD managers;

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Address
problems with the use of immature technologies by requiring the Director of Defense Research and Engineering (DDR&E) to periodically review and assess the maturity of critical technologies and by directing the Department to make greater use of prototypes, including competitive prototypes, to prove that new technologies work before trying to produce them; and,

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Address

problems with costly changes in the middle of a program by tightening the so-called "Nunn-McCurdy" requirements for underperforming programs.