



H.R. 3815 – HOMELAND SECURITY OPEN SOURCE INFORMATION ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2008

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 3815 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Ed Perlmutter (D-CO) on October 10, 2007. The House Committee on Homeland Security reported the bill, as amended, by voice vote on June 26, 2008.

H.R. 3815 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on July 29, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.R. 3815 requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a publicly available information system that will publish (in written and electronic on-line format) reports and other analytical products analyzing news and developments related to foreign terrorist organizations, and threats that may pose to homeland security. Other information to be included in these reports are recommendations on how to identify terrorist tactics and activity patterns. This unclassified information is to be shared with State, local, and tribal governments, as well as with emergency responders so that they may allocate financial resources related to terrorism prevention and take appropriate anti-terrorism safety measures.

The legislation requires the Secretary to ensure that the manner in which information for this program is collected does not violate any rights to privacy guaranteed by the Constitution and relevant laws. Additionally, the Inspector General of DHS is to perform an audit of the use of any information made available and evaluate the effectiveness of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in compliance with existing programs requiring federal transparency and information sharing.

H.R. 3815 authorizes sums as may be necessary to carry out this program.

BACKGROUND

The internet makes vast amounts of information on nearly any topic publicly available. While much of this information is used for innocent informational and commercial purposes, it may also be used by individual terrorists and organizations to attack U.S. interests at home and abroad.

The DHS is responsible for assessing the vulnerabilities of the U.S. and coordinating with State, local, and tribal governments, as well as with emergency services and private entities to help ensure that they are continually able to appropriately respond to current threats posed by terrorist organizations.

DHS runs a publically available advisory system, which uses a color coded chart that constantly evaluates the threat level posed to the U.S. homeland. The program also provides information and threat assessments when specific threats are made against individual sectors of government or geographic regions. [DHS Information Sharing](#)

COST

The Congressional Budget Office estimated that enacting H.R. 3815 “would not affect direct spending or revenues.” [Full CBO cost estimate for H.R. 3815](#)

STAFF CONTACT

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