

Eshoo Introduces Bill to Reform Security Clearance System

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Rep. Anna G. Eshoo (D-Palo Alto) has introduced legislation that will improve and reform the clearance process that national security professionals undergo in order to protect our country. Today, the number of federal employees and contractors holding clearances has grown to two and a half million, overloading the clearance system and creating tremendous backlogs.

The security clearance process is a foundation of our national security establishment, and it has to work efficiently and effectively. A strong security clearance system keeps out those who pose a security risk while quickly identifying those who are trustworthy to work in the system. This legislation will get our clearance program back on track by ensuring accountability and best practices," said Rep. Eshoo.

The Intelligence Community Management Subcommittee, led by Rep. Eshoo in the last Congress, identified several problems with the security clearance system while completing a thorough review of the clearance process last year.

The reforms contained in the Security Clearance Oversight and Accountability Act will address these shortcomings by requiring agencies to report annually to Congress on certain metrics related to the security clearance process. Where these metrics are inadequate or nonexistent, the bill requires the Administration to propose new metrics to Congress.

Underscoring the need for action, the Government Accountability Office today included the Department of Defense personnel security program in its 2009 High Risk Series, which highlights major program challenges that are impeding effective government and costing billions of dollars each year.

The original sponsors of the bill introduced today are Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Rep. Silvestre Reyes (D-TX), Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA).

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