

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 189

To establish a commission to investigate exposure to chemical and biological warfare agents as a result of the Persian Gulf conflict.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 7, 1997

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on National Security

A BILL

To establish a commission to investigate exposure to chemical and biological warfare agents as a result of the Persian Gulf conflict.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Commission on Chemi-
5 cal and Biological Warfare Agent Exposure Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.**

7 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a com-
8 mission to be known as the “Commission on Chemical and
9 Biological Warfare Agent Exposure” (in this Act referred
10 to as the “Commission”).

1 (b) COMPOSITION.—The Commission shall be com-
2 posed of 9 members (in this Act referred to as the “mem-
3 bers”) who shall be appointed as follows:

4 (1) 3 members shall be appointed by the Presi-
5 dent.

6 (2) 2 members shall be appointed by the Speak-
7 er of the House of Representatives.

8 (3) 1 member shall be appointed by the minor-
9 ity leader of the House of Representatives.

10 (4) 2 members shall be appointed by the Presi-
11 dent pro tempore of the Senate.

12 (5) 1 member shall be appointed by the minor-
13 ity leader of the Senate.

14 (c) QUALIFICATIONS.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Members shall be appointed
16 from among individuals with knowledge and exper-
17 tise relevant to the duties of the Commission, and
18 may not be officers or employees of the United
19 States.

20 (2) EXCEPTION.—A member who, when ap-
21 pointed to the Commission, was not an officer or
22 employee of the United States, and who later be-
23 comes such an officer or employee may continue as

1 a member for not longer than the 30-day period be-
2 ginning on the date that the member becomes such
3 an officer or employee.

4 (d) INITIAL APPOINTMENTS.—All initial appoint-
5 ments to the Commission shall be made not later than 90
6 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

7 (e) CHAIRMAN.—The Chairman of the Commission
8 (in this Act referred to as the “Chairman”) shall be elect-
9 ed by the members.

10 (f) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT.—Each member shall
11 be appointed for the life of the Commission.

12 (g) SECURITY CLEARANCES.—All members of the
13 Commission shall apply for appropriate security clear-
14 ances. The Secretary of Defense shall provide expedited
15 processing of security clearances of members.

16 (h) INITIAL MEETING.—The Commission shall con-
17 vene its first meeting not later than 30 days after the date
18 as of which all initial appointments to the Commission
19 have been made.

20 **SEC. 3. INVESTIGATION.**

21 The Commission shall investigate the following:

22 (1) The presence of chemical and biological
23 warfare agents in the Persian Gulf theater during
24 the Persian Gulf conflict, the amounts and locations

1 of the agents present, and the proximity of members
2 of the Armed Forces to such locations.

3 (2) The location and nature of all releases, de-
4 tections, or reports of chemical or biological warfare
5 agents in connection with the Persian Gulf conflict,
6 the identity of the units of the Armed Forces and
7 the number of individuals potentially exposed to the
8 agents, and the degree of exposure to the agents.

9 (3) The level of preparedness of members of the
10 Armed Forces to recognize and respond to possible
11 exposure to chemical and biological warfare agents
12 during the Persian Gulf conflict, the appropriateness
13 of standards used by the Armed Forces to evaluate
14 low levels of exposure to the agents, the adequacy of
15 medical training and procedures of the Armed
16 Forces for identifying and treating exposure to the
17 agents, the adequacy of information provided to
18 members of the Armed Forces on the possible pres-
19 ence or release of the agents, and the appropriate-
20 ness of instructions and procedures followed to pro-
21 tect members of the Armed Forces from exposure to
22 the agents.

23 (4) The handling by the Department of Defense
24 of reports on the use, presence, destruction, storage,

1 and transportation of chemical and biological weap-
2 ons in connection with the Persian Gulf conflict.

3 (5) The adequacy of the recordkeeping and re-
4 porting procedures of the Department of Defense
5 with respect to exposure to chemical and biological
6 warfare agents.

7 (6) The adequacy of Department of Defense
8 training, preparation, detection, and safety proce-
9 dures concerning chemical and biological warfare
10 agents.

11 **SEC. 4. REPORT.**

12 Not later than 2 years after the first meeting of the
13 Commission, the Commission shall submit to the Presi-
14 dent and the Congress a report containing—

15 (1) the results and findings of the investigation
16 conducted under section 3; and

17 (2) recommendations for such changes as the
18 Commission considers appropriate, in the record-
19 keeping, reporting, preparation, and training proce-
20 dures of the Department of Defense with respect to
21 exposure to chemical and biological warfare agents,
22 to improve the safety and readiness of members of
23 the Armed Forces.

1 **SEC. 5. POWERS.**

2 (a) HEARINGS AND SESSIONS.—The Commission
3 may, for the purpose of carrying out this Act, hold such
4 hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such
5 testimony, and receive such evidence as the Commission
6 considers appropriate. The Commission may administer
7 oaths to witnesses appearing before it.

8 (b) OBTAINING INFORMATION.—The Commission
9 may secure directly from any department or agency of the
10 United States information necessary to enable it to carry
11 out this Act. Upon request of the Chairman, the head of
12 that department or agency shall furnish that information
13 to the Commission in a full and timely manner.

14 (c) SUBPOENA POWER.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may issue
16 a subpoena to require the attendance and testimony
17 of witnesses and the production of evidence relating
18 to any matter under investigation by the Commis-
19 sion.

20 (2) FAILURE TO OBEY AN ORDER OR SUB-
21 POENA.—If a person refuses to obey an order or
22 subpoena of the Commission that is issued in con-
23 nection with a Commission proceeding, the Commis-
24 sion may apply to the United States district court in
25 the judicial district in which the proceeding is held

1 for an order requiring the person to comply with the
2 subpoena or order.

3 (d) IMMUNITY.—The Commission is an agency of the
4 United States for purposes of part V of title 18, United
5 States Code (relating to immunity of witnesses).

6 (e) CONTRACT AUTHORITY.—The Commission may
7 contract with and compensate government and private
8 agencies or persons for services without regard to section
9 3709 of the Revised Statutes (41 U.S.C. 5).

10 **SEC. 6. COMMISSION PROCEDURES.**

11 (a) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet at the
12 call of the Chairman.

13 (b) QUORUM.—5 members of the Commission shall
14 constitute a quorum but a lesser number may hold hear-
15 ings.

16 (c) DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY.—Any member or
17 agent of the Commission may, if authorized by the Com-
18 mission, take any action which the Commission is author-
19 ized to take by this Act.

20 **SEC. 7. PERSONNEL MATTERS.**

21 (a) PAY OF MEMBERS.—Members shall not be paid
22 by reason of their service as members.

23 (b) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member shall receive
24 travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence,

1 in accordance with sections 5702 and 5703 of title 5,
2 United States Code.

3 (c) DIRECTOR.—The Commission shall have a Direc-
4 tor who shall be appointed by the Chairman.

5 (d) STAFF.—With the approval of the Commission
6 and as the Director considers appropriate, the Director
7 may—

8 (1) appoint trained investigators and other
9 Commission personnel; and

10 (2) fix the pay of such trained investigators and
11 other Commission personnel.

12 (e) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE
13 LAWS.—The Director and staff of the Commission shall
14 be appointed subject to the provisions of title 5, United
15 States Code, governing appointments in the competitive
16 service, and shall be paid in accordance with the provisions
17 of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of that
18 title relating to classification and General Schedule pay
19 rates.

20 **SEC. 8. OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.**

21 (a) POSTAL AND PRINTING SERVICES.—The Com-
22 mission may use the United States mails and obtain print-
23 ing and binding services in the same manner and under
24 the same conditions as other departments and agencies of
25 the United States.

1 (b) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—Upon
2 the request of the Commission, the Administrator of Gen-
3 eral Services shall provide to the Commission, on a reim-
4 bursable basis, the administrative support services nec-
5 essary for the Commission to carry out its duties under
6 this Act.

7 (c) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—The Commission
8 may procure temporary and intermittent services under
9 section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code.

10 **SEC. 9. BUDGET ACT COMPLIANCE.**

11 Any spending authority (as defined in subparagraphs
12 (A) and (C) of section 401(c)(2) of the Congressional
13 Budget Act of 1974) authorized by this Act shall be effec-
14 tive only to such extent and in such amounts as are pro-
15 vided in advance in appropriations Acts.

16 **SEC. 10. TERMINATION OF COMMISSION.**

17 The Commission shall terminate 60 days after sub-
18 mitting its report pursuant to section 4.

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