

INTRODUCTION OF H.R. 553: THE
REDUCING OVER-CLASSIFICA-
TION ACT OF 2009

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Ms. HARMAN. Madam Speaker, America's first preventers will face an enormous challenge next Tuesday. They must protect key members of this and the next Administration—especially the first families—and manage crowds of millions for the largest American Presidential Inauguration to date, working seamlessly with federal counterparts to do so.

Unprecedented efforts will be made to share information—especially information about threats. Information sharing was a huge problem leading up to 9/11, and 7 years later, we still have work to do.

When the Inauguration is over, local law enforcement shouldn't have to return to business-as-usual—where it is still difficult to get accurate, actionable, and timely information about threats and tactics to police officers in the field.

Though hard to believe, sheriffs and police chiefs can't readily access the information they need to prevent or disrupt a potential terrorist attack because those at the federal level resist sharing information. Over-classification and pseudo-classification—stamping with any number of sensitive but unclassified markings—remain rampant.

Protecting sources and methods is the only valid reason to refuse to share information. It is no exaggeration that people die and our ability to monitor certain targets can be compromised, if sources and methods are revealed.

But classifying information for the wrong reasons—to protect turf or to avoid embarrassment—is wrong. During my 8 years on the House Intelligence Committee, I became incredibly frustrated with this practice—which the Bush Administration elevated to an art form.

And, sadly, the practice has spread to our newest federal agency: the Department of Homeland Security.

Madam Speaker, the next attack in the United States will not be stopped because a bureaucrat in Washington, DC found out about it in advance. It will be the cop on the beat who is familiar with the rhythms and nuances of his or her own neighborhood who will foil that attack.

H.R. 553, the Reducing Over-Classification Act, and which passed the House unanimously in the 110th Congress, is an attempt to establish a gold standard at DHS when it comes to classification practices.

It requires that all classified intelligence products created at the Department be simultaneously created in a standard unclassified format if such a product would help local law enforcement keep us safe. This is unprecedented.

Furthermore, the bill requires portion marking—the identification of paragraphs in a document that are classified—permitting the remainder of the document to remain unclassified.

The measure will promote accountability by requiring the DHS Inspector General to sample randomly classified intelligence products

and identify problems that exist in those samples.

It also directs the Secretary to develop a plan to track electronically how and where information classified by DHS is disseminated so that misuse can be prevented.

Finally, the legislation requires the Secretary to establish extensive annual training on the proper use of the classification regime, and penalties for staff who repeatedly fail to comply with applicable classification policies.

A key to homeland security is personal preparedness. A prepared public is not likely to be terrorized. Access to important non-classified information is essential to ensure preparedness, and this bill protects the public's right to know. It enjoys support by privacy and civil liberty groups.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of first preventers and first responders everywhere, I urge passage of this essential bipartisan legislation, and its prompt consideration in the Senate.

SCHOOL BUILDING ENHANCEMENT
ACT

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the School Building Enhancement Act, legislation that would help schools implement energy saving measures to reduce their energy costs.

According to the Department of Energy, DOE schools spent over \$8 billion on energy in 2007—\$2 billion more than they spent just two years earlier. Sky-rocketing energy costs have forced schools to spend more annually on heating and electricity than they spend on textbooks and computers combined. Energy is the second-highest operating expenditure for schools after personnel costs. Schools across the country are already facing tight budgets; rising energy costs will only worsen their budget situation and could lead to the loss of important school programs.

Fortunately, there are ways for schools to offset the soaring price of energy. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, 30 percent of energy consumed in buildings is used unnecessarily or inefficiently. By understanding where energy is used unwisely and implementing simple changes in the operations and maintenance of school buildings, a school's operating costs can be reduced by 5 to 25 percent. Schools that are seeking even greater long-term savings can retrofit their buildings with more efficient systems and replace old appliances. The \$2 billion saved could be used for purchases that directly benefit our nation's students—such as hiring 30,000 new teachers or purchasing 40 million additional textbooks.

However, cash-strapped school systems often are unable to find the necessary financial resources to invest in these energy efficient upgrades. The School Building Enhancement Act would assist schools in making these improvements by providing grants to states and local educational agencies through the Department of Education for energy efficiency upgrades. These improvements would need to follow the guidelines of the EnergySmart

Schools Program of the Department of Energy or the Energy Star for K–12 School Districts program at the Environmental Protection Agency.

If enacted, the School Building Enhancement Act would provide the needed funding for schools in my home state of New Jersey, and throughout the country, to implement energy efficiency measures that would help schools save thousands of dollars annually.

Schools that already have implemented energy efficiency measures have succeeded in achieving significant savings. For example, the Summerfield Elementary School in my home state of New Jersey has implemented energy efficiency measures that have reduced their consumption by 32 percent, allowing Summerfield to save \$41,000 annually on energy costs. Summerfield is just one of many schools that are being built to use energy smarter and more efficiently. According to the EPA more than 800 schools have been Energy Star certified, saving an average of 40 cents per square foot in operating costs annually.

Twenty-five of my colleagues have joined me in introducing this important legislation to help cash-strapped schools achieve significant savings on their energy costs and protect the environment. I urge my colleagues to support the School Building Enhancement Act.

INTRODUCING THE SAVE OUR
CLIMATE ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise today with my colleague JIM McDERMOTT to reintroduce the Save Our Climate Act, a bill to place a tax on carbon. A carbon tax is the most straightforward and efficient way to end our addiction to fossil fuels and confront global climate change.

While I have introduced this proposal in years past, I am more confident than ever that the time for action has arrived. We have a President-elect who consistently acknowledges that our planet is in peril. The upcoming economic recovery package will focus on creating "green jobs" and investing in clean energy.

The best solution is to place a tax on what we want to reduce—pollution; and to put that revenue into what we want to increase—work, income, and investment in new technology. A carbon tax is the best way to do that.

Under the Save Our Climate Act, carbon based fuels—coal, petroleum and natural gas—are taxed at a rate of \$10 per ton of carbon content. The tax will increase by \$10 per ton of carbon every year, making it less affordable to burn fossil fuels as time goes on. When the United States reaches the International Panel on Climate Change's standard of reducing CO₂ emissions by 80 percent, the tax will be frozen.

A tax provides certainty for businesses, as they will know what the level of tax will be from year to year and can make adjustments in their business plans. This legislation is also simple to administer and will require no new bureaucracy to implement. For these reasons, the Congressional Budget Office, CBO, concluded last year that a carbon tax is the most

economically efficient policy for reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

This bill does not prescribe how the revenue will be spent, but it is appropriate that we consider relief for low- and middle-income consumers who may face modestly higher energy costs, and investments in alternative energy sources, health care, and education.

The Save Our Climate Act will generate a small energy price increase each year, equal to about 2 cents per gallon of gas annually. Consumers over the past year have endured increases 100 times that. The only difference is that the increase in price went to overseas coffers, not to build our transportation networks, provide relief for workers, and health care for our citizens. As the tax rate increases, fossil fuel prices will increase. Producers will have an incentive to invest in cleaner alternative energies, and those alternative energy sources will become more competitive.

For businesses, the carbon tax is direct, creates price certainty, and signals that it is time to take bold action and invest in business models that utilize low pollution technology. Even the CEO of Exxon commented last week calling a carbon tax a "direct and transparent approach." I don't normally find myself on the same side as the oil companies, but in this case, I agree. The Save Our Climate Act is a first step toward a sensible tax code that incentivizes innovation and rewards responsibility. I encourage all to support it.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Mr. SHERMAN. Madam Speaker, yesterday, I was unable to make a number of votes because I was at the hospital with my wife for the delivery of our first child. I am pleased to announce that we had a healthy, beautiful baby girl named Molly Hannah.

Had I been present I would have voted: "yea" on rollcall No. 14; "nay" on rollcall No. 15; "yea" on rollcall No. 16 in support of H.R. 2, the bill to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program, of which I was proud to be an original cosponsor; "yea" on rollcall No. 17, which allowed the House to proceed with a bill improving the TARP program; and "yea" on rollcall No. 18.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN SULLIVAN

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam Speaker, I missed rollcall vote 16 to H.R. 2 taken on January 14, 2009, and had I been present for this vote, I would have voted "nay."

I am opposed to H.R. 2 because I believe this legislation is one more step toward forcing Americans into a Washington controlled, one-size-fits-all health care system by creating another fiscally irresponsible entitlement to be supported by American taxpayers. Also, an expansion of SCHIP should not encourage people to drop their private coverage in order

to get free or subsidized public health care coverage.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SUPERFUND REINVESTMENT ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 15, 2009

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the "Superfund Reinvestment Act," which would reauthorize the corporate taxes that fund the Superfund trust fund. This bill will reestablish the polluter pays principle and our commitment to cleaning up the Nation's most hazardous sites.

The Environmental Protection Agency's, EPA, Superfund program was created in 1980 to provide money to clean up the nation's worst hazardous waste sites where the party responsible for polluting was out of business or could not be identified. Before they expired in 1995, the money for the Superfund trust fund came mainly from taxes on the polluters themselves. The program has contributed to the cleanup of over 1000 sites around the country. Because Congress has not reauthorized the taxes, the burden of funding cleanups of toxic waste sites now falls on the shoulders of taxpaying Americans. Reauthorizing the Superfund tax would ensure that polluters—not the American public—pay to restore public health.

Superfund sites contain toxic contaminants that have been detected in drinking water wells, creeks and rivers, backyards, playgrounds, and streets. Communities impacted by these sites can face restrictions on water use, gardening and recreational activities as well as economic losses as property values decline due to contaminated land. In the worst cases, residents of these communities can face health problems such as cardiac impacts, infertility, low birth weight, birth defects, leukemia, and respiratory difficulties.

Until they expired in 1995, the superfund taxes generated around \$1.7 billion a year to clean up these hazardous areas. The "Superfund Reinvestment Act" would simply reinstate the taxes as they were before they expired. This will provide a stable source of funding to continue cleaning up sites around the country as well as give the EPA the tools it needs to clean up sites and then recover the costs from liable parties who do not undertake the work themselves.

I urge my colleagues to join me in working to strengthen the Superfund program and ensure that it continues to help keep our communities and our families safe, healthy, and economically secure.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 13, 2009

Ms. McCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, as a Co-chair of the Congressional Mentoring Caucus,

I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 41, supporting the goals and ideals of National Mentoring Month.

A mentor by definition means a trusted friend or guide. Mentoring relationships between adults and youths are very important, especially because of the focus on the needs of our young people. Caring parents, teachers, counselors, and religious leaders are all mentors, and are in a position to positively influence a child's present and future.

We all have an important role to play in improving the lives of children in our communities—after all, it takes a village. Our youth are yearning for guidance and direction from caring adults and mentoring enables everyday Americans to make a difference and help children grow up to become responsible and productive citizens and meet their full potential. A study by Big Brothers Big Sisters showed mentored youth are 46 percent less likely to begin using illegal drugs, 53 percent less likely to skip school, and 33 percent less likely to get in fights.

National Mentoring Month was conceived as a means to recruit mentors and help close the mentoring gap. Last year, more than 375,000 individuals sought information about local mentoring programs that need more volunteers.

I am proud to announce Joellen Gonder-Spacek, executive director of the Mentoring Partnership of Minnesota, MPM, has been honored with the Manza Excellence in Leadership Award by MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership. She was recognized for her leadership and commitment to service through MPM's community initiative to promote mentoring for at risk youth in Minnesota. This program has made significant improvements in the lives of children and, over the past 14 years, MPM has become a mentoring leader in the State and the Nation.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this resolution and to look for opportunities to be mentors as well.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2009

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

Mr. HOLT. Madam Speaker, I voted yesterday in support of our Nation's children and for passage of the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009, H.R. 2.

More than 7.1 million children have health insurance because of the creation, a decade ago, of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, SCHIP. However, these children will lose access to good, affordable health insurance if Congress does not act to reauthorize the SCHIP program by March 31, 2009.

Yesterday, the House approved the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009, which would expand the SCHIP program to ensure even more children have access to the health care their parents cannot afford or who work in jobs that do not provide health care benefits. The House of Representatives has passed similar legislation twice before to extend and expand SCHIP,