

## Oppose the New Homeland Security Bureaucracy!

by **Rep. Ron Paul, MD**

*Ron Paul in the US House of Representatives, November 13, 2002*

Mr. Speaker, when the process of creating a Department of Homeland Security commenced, Congress was led to believe that the legislation would be a simple reorganization aimed at increasing efficiency, not an attempt to expand federal power. Fiscally conservative members of Congress were even told that the bill would be budget neutral! Yet, when the House of Representatives initially considered creating a Department of Homeland Security, the legislative vehicle almost overnight grew from 32 pages to 282 pages – and the cost had ballooned to at least \$3 billion. Now we are prepared to vote on a nearly 500-page bill that increases federal expenditures and raises troubling civil liberties questions. Adding insult to injury, this bill was put together late last night and introduced only this morning. Worst of all, the text of the bill has not been made readily available to most members, meaning this Congress is prepared to create a massive new federal agency without even knowing the details. This is a dangerous and irresponsible practice.

The last time Congress attempted a similarly ambitious reorganization of the government was with the creation of the Department of Defense in 1947. However, the process by which we are creating this new department bears little resemblance to the process by which the Defense Department was created. Congress began hearings on the proposed Department of Defense in 1945 – two years before President Truman signed legislation creating the new Department into law! Despite the lengthy deliberative process through which Congress created that new department, turf battles and logistical problems continued to bedevil the military establishment, requiring several corrective pieces of legislation. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Goldwater-Nicholas Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 was passed to deal with problems steaming from the 1947 law! The experience with the Department of Defense certainly suggests the importance of a more deliberative process in the

creation of this new agency.

HR 5710 grants major new powers to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by granting HHS the authority to "administer" the smallpox vaccine to members of the public if the Department unilaterally determines that there is a public health threat posed by smallpox. HHS would not even have to demonstrate an actual threat of a smallpox attack, merely the "potential" of an attack. Thus, this bill grants federal agents the authority to force millions of Americans to be injected with a potentially lethal vaccine based on nothing more than a theoretical potential smallpox incident. Furthermore, this provision continues to restrict access to the smallpox vaccine from those who have made a voluntary choice to accept the risk of the vaccine in order to protect themselves from smallpox. It is hard to think of a more blatant violation of liberty than allowing government officials to force people to receive potentially dangerous vaccines based on hypothetical risks.

While this provision appears to be based on similar provisions granting broad mandatory vaccination and quarantine powers to governors from the controversial "Model Health Emergency Powers Act," this provision has not been considered by the House. Instead, this provision seems to have been snuck into the bill at the last minute. At the very least, Mr. Speaker, before Congress grants HHS such sweeping powers, we should have an open debate instead of burying the authorization in a couple of paragraphs tucked away in a 484-page bill!

HR 5710 also expands the federal police state by allowing the attorney general to authorize federal agency inspectors general and their agents to carry firearms and make warrantless arrests. One of the most disturbing trends in recent years is the increase in the number of federal officials authorized to carry guns. This is especially disturbing when combined with the increasing trend toward restricting the ability of average Americans to exercise their second amendment rights. Arming the government while disarming the public encourages abuses of power.

Mr. Speaker, HR 5710 gives the federal government new powers and increases federal expenditures, completely contradicting what members were told about the bill. Furthermore, these new power grabs are being rushed through Congress without giving members the ability to debate, or even properly study, this proposal. I must oppose this bill and urge my colleagues to do the same.



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