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Reps. Tauscher, Spratt, and Meehan Introduce Bill to Deter Weapons of Mass Destruction

Representatives Ellen Tauscher (D-CA), John Spratt (D-SC), and Martin Meehan (D-MA) today introduced a bill to improve the nation's defenses and responses against weapons of mass destruction.

The 9/11 Commission Combating Proliferation Implementation Act implements the 9/11 Commission's nonproliferation recommendations.

“This bill gives proper priority to one of the 9/11 Commission's most important recommendations—one overlooked by other reform proposals. At a time when we read daily about the threats posed by North Korean and Iran, this bill would take critical strides to reduce nuclear, chemical, and biological material around the globe and give the United States the necessary tools to fight the proliferation of the world's most dangerous weapons,” said **Rep. Tauscher**.

“As horrific as the September 11 attacks were, we all shudder to imagine how much worse the carnage could have been had those terrorists used a nuclear device. There is no better way is to protect Americans from weapons of mass destruction than to protect or eliminate those weapons at the source. Our bill is a good start,” said **Rep. Spratt**.

The bill does four things:

1. It **creates a director of nonproliferation** within the White House who is given full budget authority over the nation's nonproliferation programs and tasked with designing and implementing a strategic plan for addressing the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

Currently, nonproliferation efforts are executed by the Departments of Energy, Defense and State. **While they all have had success, they are not guided by an overall plan and or supported by a single individual who has the ability to ensure accountability and that they are meeting the President's objectives.** Because of this lack of high-level attention and leadership, some programs have either lapsed or been burdened with unrelated restrictions. The director would ensure that these valuable programs are used more effectively to reduce the threat of weapons of mass destruction. Such a coordinating function has been recommended in several reports including the 1999 Deutch Commission to Assess the Organization of the Federal Government to combat the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

2. It **accelerates the removal and improves the security of fissile materials and related equipment at vulnerable sites worldwide.** As has been observed in countless reports and testimony, the greatest danger to the United States continues to be the prospect of a rogue state or terrorist group acquiring fissile material to make a nuclear weapon from the inadequately guarded facilities in the former Soviet Union or one of the dozens of nuclear research facilities throughout the world.
3. It **expands the Proliferation Security Initiative** announced by the President, which intercepts illegal shipments of weapons of mass destruction materials, by authorizing funds for joint training exercises with nations that join the PSI.
4. It **expands the United States cooperative threat reduction programs** that have had an impressive track record at deactivating over 13,000 warheads, destroying over 1,400 Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs), eliminating over 800 ICBM silos, and hundreds of ICBM mobile launchers. As the 9/11 Commission observed, “the government's main instrument in this area, the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, is now in need of expansion, improvement and resources.”