



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

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Grassley Praises Final Port Security Bill, Urges Senate Passage

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, today praised the final port security bill that emerged after discussions among the various committees of jurisdiction, including the Finance Committee. Grassley submitted a statement into the Senate record describing the value of the bill. The text of his statement follows.

Statement of Senator Chuck Grassley Regarding H.R. 4954

Mr. President, I rise in strong support of the amendment before the Senate that's been offered as a complete substitute to H.R. 4954. This legislation could not be more timely. The anniversary of September 11th is imminent, a stark reminder that our nation must remain vigilant in the global war on terror.

This amendment, the *Port Security Improvement Act of 2006*, is critically important legislation. It strengthens port security operations, both in the United States and abroad, so we can prevent threats from reaching our shores in the first place.

This legislation improves existing programs for targeting and inspecting cargo containers so that a dangerous shipment doesn't enter or threaten the nation. It provides direction for further strengthening of these programs as technological advances permit. And, it calls for greater coordination and cooperation among federal agencies in contingency planning in the event there is a security breach.

This legislation represents a thoughtful re-evaluation of how best to meet the nation's security interests at United States seaports. We've taken a look at what's been done since 9/11. This legislation builds upon that. Terrorists have proven that they'll change their ways to exploit perceived weaknesses in our defenses. We need to stay ahead of them. This legislation empowers our personnel in the Department of Homeland Security and United States Border and Customs Protection to do just that.

At the same time, this legislation includes provisions to strengthen the economic security of our nation. It's important to remember that in addition to killing innocent Americans, the 9/11 attacks were intended to wreak economic havoc and injury upon our nation. This legislation includes provisions that realign resources to ensure better efficiency in the administration of customs laws within the United States Customs and Border Protection. It authorizes the International Trade Data

System, a forward-looking program to better utilize technology in order to increase efficiency and facilitate trade. And, it provides for added resources to better meet all of our economic and trade security interests that are overseen by the United States Customs and Border Protection.

In sum, this legislation is the culmination of months of hard and thoughtful work. I want to thank my Ranking Member on the Finance Committee, Senator Baucus, my colleagues on the Commerce committee, Senator Stevens and Senator Inouye, and my colleagues on the Homeland Security committee, Senator Collins and Senator Lieberman, with whom I have worked so closely to bring this legislation to the floor. I urge all of my colleagues to join me in advancing this essential legislation through the Senate in a timely manner.