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Committee Republicans Call on Pelosi to Consolidate Oversight of DHS

Washington, D.C. (Thursday, November 20, 2008)—Today, U.S. Rep. Peter T. King (R-NY), Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, along with fellow Homeland Security Ranking Members, sent a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi calling on Democrat leaders to consolidate oversight of the Department of Homeland Security at the beginning of the 111th Congress. Currently, DHS must answer to over 100 Congressional committees and subcommittees, a number which has risen from 86 only a year ago.

“As we look to January, it is ironic that now a Democratic administration may be forced to deal with a problem its partners in Congress failed to solve,” King said. “In the 109th Congress, Republicans took the important first step of making the Committee on Homeland Security a permanent, standing committee, but since the Democrats took control of Congress we have only gone backwards. The fact that the department now reports to over 100 committees and subcommittees brings the situation to a new low.”

The 9/11 Commission recommended in 2004 that Congress “create a single, principal point of oversight and review for homeland security.” Yet when Democrats convened the 110th Congress, they failed to consolidate oversight of DHS, a task that could have been accomplished by a simple rule change. Again with the passage of H.R. 1, the “Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007,” Democrats ignored one of the most important 9/11 Commission recommendations, failing to streamline oversight.

“No matter which party is in the White House, House Republicans will continue to fight to fix DHS oversight,” King said. “Now more than ever, this is severely detrimental to our national security. The more opposing directives the new DHS is given and the more time officials spend testifying before Congress, the less time they can spend actually making this country more secure. House Democrats are out of excuses—this must be done now.”

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