

OpenTheGovernment.org

Americans for Less Secrecy, More Democracy

July 28, 2006

The Honorable Duncan Hunter, Chair
The Honorable Ike Skelton, Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hunter and Ranking Member Skelton:

The undersigned organizations, as members of OpenTheGovernment.org, are writing to request your leadership in helping to restore meaningful whistleblower protection rights in the FY2007 Defense Authorization Act. Recent Senate action and repeated House Government Reform Committee votes have created an opportunity to make America a safer and more secure place, and we ask your assistance in seizing that opportunity. OpenTheGovernment.org is a coalition of journalists, consumer and good government groups, environmentalists, labor and others united to make the federal government a more open place.

As you are aware, the Senate included the Federal Employees Protection of Disclosures Act (S. 494) in its version of the defense authorization bill, Sec. 1089 of S. 2766. While S. 494 is a good bill, deserving of support, the House Government Reform Committee has gone further, reporting out two important pieces of legislation, H. R. 1317 and H.R. 5112, that strengthen rights of government employees to make them equal those afforded corporate whistleblowers in the landmark Sarbanes-Oxley law.

H.R. 1317 extends to government whistleblowers the right to access a jury trial to challenge retaliation for whistleblowing, a right that has been available for employees at public corporations since 2002. H.R. 5112 extends genuine whistleblower rights to all employees responsible for protecting America's security and safety. These significant reforms were adopted after an intensive process of building a record and achieving bi-partisan consensus within the Government Reform Committee.

www.openthegovernment.org

OpenTheGovernment.org, 1742 Connecticut Avenue N.W., 3rd Floor, Washington D.C. 20009
202-332-OPEN (6736)

A project of the Fund for Constitutional Government.

All donations are tax-deductible to the maximum allowable by law.

We join the Make it Safe Coalition in urging that H.R. 1317/5112 be substituted for the Senate's suggested whistleblower amendments in Sec. 1089 of S. 2677.

Thank you very much for your consideration and support. Please contact Patrice McDermott, Director of OpenTheGovernment.org (202-234-8494), if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

American Association of Law Libraries

Californians Aware

Common Cause

National Coalition Against Censorship

OMB Watch

Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER)

Project on Government Oversight

Society of Professional Journalists