

DoD Report Seeks Return to A-76 Job Competitions

BY SARAH CHACKO | JULY 19, 2011

The Defense Department has told Congress it wishes to resume job competitions between contractors and federal workers as a way to save money and manpower.

Public-private competitions conducted through guidance offered in Office of Management and Budget Circular A-76 saved \$9 billion in operating costs between 1997 and 2009 and reduced manpower by 40 percent, a recent Defense Department report shows.

Those competitions were stopped by Congress in 2009 after inspector general reports criticized the department for not adequately tracking savings and having insufficient staff, and for problems within the A-76 process, such as how costs for federal workers were calculated.

The June 23 DoD report, sent to the chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate Armed Services and Appropriations committees, was required before the moratorium on public-private competitions could be lifted.

In its report, DoD said it needs the A-76 competition as a tool in determining the most efficient and cost-effective manpower best suited for its missions.

The American Federation of Government Employees opposes any move to resume job competitions at the department, arguing that problems remain with how the A-76 process works, such as a requirement that work done by federal workers — but not work done by contractors — is automatically recompeteted every five years.

The department rebuffed concerns raised by the inspector general that its system to track and assess the cost and performance of competed functions is inadequate.

"A few data entry errors should not lead to a conclusion that a reliable system has not been implemented," the report states.

The management system could be expanded beyond tracking public-private competition data, if appropriately funded, to track insourcing efforts across the department and help with a required count of inherently governmental and commercial activities, the report states.