

Lawmakers Offer Bill to Reform Government Outsourcing

By FederalDaily Staff

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Lawmakers reintroduced a bill that would reform the Office of Management and Budget Circular A-76 contracting-out process and ensure that inherently governmental work is performed only by federal employees.

The CLEAN UP Act, formally known as the Correction of Longstanding Errors in Agencies Unsustainable Procurements Act, was introduced May 13 in the House and Senate by Rep. John Sarbanes (D-Md.) and Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), respectively. Mikulski originally introduced the bill in 2009, but it failed to win approval in the last session of Congress.

The new bill would require agencies to bring back in house those functions that are inherently governmental as well as those that are mission-essential but had been inappropriately contracted out. Under the previous administration, federal spending on outsourced work more than doubled from \$222 billion in 2001 to \$532 billion in 2008, a 140 percent increase, Mikulski said.

The bill also would temporarily suspend the A-76 privatization process until the OMB director and the inspectors general of the five largest agencies determine that all of the reforms required by the bill had been substantially implemented, Mikulski said.

Labor leaders applauded the bill.

"In the current fiscal crisis, it is important that the federal government look for ways to maximize its resources and to root out waste, fraud and abuse," National Treasury Employees Union President Colleen Kelley said. "One way is to reform the broken competitive sourcing process and bring contracted work back in house."

American Federation of Government Employees President John Gage agreed.

The bill "is vital to any serious effort to save taxpayer dollars and restore integrity to the federal sourcing process," Gage said.

The bill would also require agencies to determine whether they will soon experience shortages of federal employees and devise plans for addressing those shortages. An estimated 600,000 federal jobs — close to one-third of government positions — will need to be filled in the next four years.