

Federal Computer Week

Spending Panel wants Inventory of Service Contracts

The House Appropriations Committee wants to know what was outsourced, to whom and how well the work was done

- **By Matthew Weigelt**
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The House Appropriations Committee wants all agencies to take an inventory of their services contracts and consider letting federal employees perform that work.

The fiscal 2010 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act would require civilian agencies to create an annual inventory of services they've outsourced to the private sector and review whether to return the work to government employees.

In the inventories, the committee wants to know what services were outsourced, when a contract began, whether a contract was awarded competitively, and if the contractor's work was done poorly. The committee is also interested in how closely contractors are coming to performing inherently governmental functions, or work that only a government employee can do. The committee approved the bill July 7, but the full House has not debated it. The panel said it expects a lot of savings from those reviews, and the Army has saved \$50 million from going through that process.

The new provision copies what the fiscal 2008 National Defense Authorization Act wanted from the Defense Department. However, the department has yet to submit its inventory to Congress even two years later.

The House Armed Services Committee acknowledged that such a task takes time, but it's concerned because DoD hasn't submitted any information or even a plan of how it will take on the job. The fiscal 2010 National Defense Authorization Act directs DoD to tell the committee how it plans to get started on the work, according to the committee's report on the legislation. The House passed the bill in June.

The Army has an inventory of its services contracts, but it began the counting in 2002. The Navy and Air Force departments are expected to turn in a sample inventory this fiscal year. However, the committee is concerned that those samples won't be as detailed as lawmakers had wanted.

