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Thune Seeks to Protect Private-sector from 'Unfair' Government Competition

By: **Staff**, The Daily Republic

WASHINGTON – U.S. Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., today introduced the Freedom from Government Competition Act (S.1167), a bill that he said would require federal agencies to rely on the private sector when providing goods and services that are readily available.

According to Thune's news release, the federal government has identified that roughly 850,000 federal employees perform jobs that can be classified as “commercial in nature,” which means in many instances the federal government is competing directly against main street businesses.

“The federal government provides many services that can be found by simply opening a phone book,” Thune said. “This bill would ensure the government isn’t involving itself in areas that duplicate products and services that are available in the private sector and in doing so protecting taxpayer interests. This legislation would give private companies the chance to do the work which has been shown to save taxpayer money.”

Thune’s legislation would codify the “Yellow Pages” test, which says that if the federal government is doing something that can be found in the Yellow Pages, the product or service should be subject to market competition to ensure better value for the taxpayer. Studies have shown that taxpayer savings as a result of competition are estimated to be as much as \$28 billion annually, Thune's news release said.

The news release said Thune's legislation does not mandate the privatization of any federal service and would protect those activities which are inherently governmental, such as certain national defense and homeland security functions, prosecutions, foreign policy and activities to bind the United States to take or not to take some action by contract, policy, regulation, authorization, or order.

Cosponsors of Thune’s bill include Sens. James Inhofe, R-Okla.; Pat Roberts, R-Kan., Sam Brownback, R-Kan.; and David Vitter, R-La.