

Washington, D.C. - Today, Rep. David Price (D-NC) applauded the House of Representatives' approval of the IMPROVE Acquisition Act (H.R. 5013), which would overhaul defense acquisition spending to clean up waste, fraud and abuse and provide greater oversight of the Department of Defense's use of private contractors. The bill, which the House passed by a vote of 417 to 3, could save taxpayers up to \$135 billion over the next five years.

"This bill represents a major step toward cleaning up wasteful defense spending and bringing greater transparency and oversight to the Pentagon's outsourcing practices," Rep. Price said. "The House's overwhelming and bipartisan approval of this bill should send a clear signal that we want every taxpayer dollar spent on defense to be used responsibly, effectively, and with maximum benefit to our men and women in uniform."

In recent years, Rep. Price has been at the forefront of congressional efforts to bring greater transparency and accountability to the use of private contractors by federal agencies including the Department of Defense, with a particular focus on the use of private security contractors in war zones. In 2007, the House approved Rep. Price's bill to bring overseas contractors under U.S. legal jurisdiction (the MEJA Expansion and Enforcement Act, or H.R. 2740) by a broad bipartisan majority, and he has introduced an updated version of the legislation (the Civilian Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act, or H.R. 4567) in the current Congress. He is also the sponsor of two related bills in the current Congress – the Transparency and Accountability in Security Contracting Act (H.R. 2177), and the Transparency and Accountability in Intelligence Contracting Act (H.R. 963) – that seek to clean up the federal government's contracting practices more broadly.

By requiring the Department of Defense to establish new, comprehensive guidelines for the acquisition of services (including private security services), the IMPROVE Act represents an additional step toward greater oversight and accountability for private contractors.

"The bill's explicit focus on services contracting should empower the Pentagon to devote greater scrutiny to private security contracts before they are issued and provide greater oversight of them once they are operational," Rep. Price said "I am hopeful that it will also lead DoD to think harder about which services should be outsourced to begin with."

H.R. 5013, sponsored by Reps. Rob Andrews (D-N.J.) and Michael Conaway (R-TX) – who

were appointed to lead a special Panel on Defense Acquisition Reform – would clean up the defense acquisition system in four key areas:

- Building a better accountability system to make sure that we get the most value for every dollar spent on defense acquisition;
- Strengthening the acquisition workforce to give both military and civilian personnel better training, better tools, and more opportunities to improve their performance and produce better outcomes;
- Improving DOD's financial management system to make it auditable so that American taxpayers know where their money is going; and
- Expanding the industrial base to enhance competition and gain access to more technology.

The measure awaits action in the Senate where it has been referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

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