



One Hundred Tenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

March 6, 2007

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

A number of disturbing issues regarding the Federal Protective Service (FPS) have recently come to my attention. Therefore, pursuant to Rule X (3) (g) and Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, I am requesting that you provide the following information to the Committee on Homeland Security no later than March 21, 2007:

1. In January 2007, Former FPS Inspector Michael Czecholinski, who worked as a Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) was convicted of accepting bribes from a private contractor, in exchange for favorable performance ratings during the contracting evaluation process.
 - a. The Inspector General has found that FPS oversees over 500 contracts with private security firms throughout the country. These private contractors employ approximately 15,000 guards responsible for protecting federal buildings throughout the nation.
 - i. How many CORs are used by FPS to monitor performance and assure accountability for these contracts?
 - ii. What controls are currently in place to prevent and detect improper influence in the contract evaluation process?
 - b. Given the discovery of this criminal activity does the Department plan to initiate any additional internal checks and balances on the contract evaluation process to prevent or detect this kind of criminal activity?
2. Recent press reports indicate that FPS is planning to eliminate over 250 police officers, inspectors, and other FPS employees, curtail payment of retention allowances, and cease monetary employee awards. Additionally, we are aware of reports that indicate that the agency will no longer pay for routine FPS officer training courses.
 - a. Please provide the total amount of money the Department projects will be saved by these personnel actions over the next two fiscal years.

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- b. Please provide a narrative explanation of the impact that these cuts will have on the security of federal facilities currently guarded by FPS.
 - c. Please provide a narrative explanation of the controls the Department is putting in place to ensure that these personnel cuts do not adversely affect FPS' overall operations.
3. There have been numerous press reports concerning an FPS budgetary shortfall. These reports indicate that the shortfall may range from \$40-\$80 million. The Government Accountability Office and the Department's Inspector General have found that this shortfall began when FPS was originally transferred from the General Services Administration to the Department of Homeland Security. However, it appears that since FPS has been a component of the Department, the shortfall has only worsened. Please provide me with information on:
 - a. The exact amount of the FPS budgetary shortfall;
 - b. The Department's plan to address this shortfall;
 - c. The Department's position on FPS's ability to directly bill agencies both within the Department and external to the Department for security services provided by FPS; and
 - d. A narrative statement explaining whether FPS is currently involved in homeland security activities not directly related to facility protection, and if so, the nature of such activities and the extent to which FPS may be involved in said activities.

I am sure you share my concern for FPS' future viability and the likelihood that staff reductions, budget shortfalls and inadequate contractor oversight may converge to severely hamper the operations of this agency. As a component of the Department charged with the responsibility of safeguarding our homeland, FPS should be a flagship security agency. Yet, it appears that budgetary and management challenges are causing this agency to flounder. It would seem that a weakened FPS may negatively impact safety at federal offices and facilities across the country.

If you have any questions, please contact Cherri Branson, Chief Oversight Counsel, at (202) 226-2616.

Sincerely,



Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman

BGT/aai