

House Passes Legislation Based on Castle's Comprehensive Rail Security Bill -- March 27, 2007

Washington D.C. -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle today helped pass legislation, 'The Rail and Public Transportation Security Act of 2007', based on his own comprehensive Rail Security and Public Awareness Act from the 109th Congress. Additionally, the legislation included an amendment offered by Castle which would require the Secretary of Homeland Security to study the cost and feasibility of implementing foreign rail security practices that are not currently used in the United States.

"For many years now, I have been raising the issue that our approach to homeland security isn't as comprehensive as it should be, because it left rail as a 'soft target'. I have been pushing for funding for surveillance and communications equipment and a strategy and timeline for a comprehensive national rail security policy," Castle said.

"Additionally, my amendment strengthens the legislation to make certain that we are knowledgeable and consider all available options when it comes to ensuring the safety and security of our rail system here in the United States. While the concept of 'rail security' is relatively new here at home, security officials in Europe and Asia have decades of experience with terrorist attacks and I have long believed in the importance of leveraging this experience to improve our own system. The amendment takes steps to improve rail and transit security by requiring the Secretary of Homeland Security to study the cost and feasibility of implementing valuable practices used in other countries and submit a report with recommendations to the Homeland Security and Transportation Committees within one year of enactment. The time is now to upgrade rail security here at home," Castle said.

Rep. Castle's amendment would require the Homeland Secretary to study the cost and feasibility of implementing foreign rail security practices that are not currently used in the U.S. These recommendations come from a Government Accountability Office Report Castle commissioned a few years ago:

- (1) Implementing covert testing processes, such as testing security responses to suspicious packages and open emergency doors on a daily basis, to evaluate the effectiveness of rail system security personnel.
- (2) Implementing practices used by foreign rail operators that integrate security into infrastructure design.
- (3) Implementing random searches or screening of passengers and their baggage.
- (4) Establishing an information clearinghouse on security best practices used in the U.S. and abroad.

Provisions of the Rail and Public Transportation Security Act of 2007 that were based on Congressman Castle's legislation are outlined below:

- Requires a strategy and timeline for the Department of Transportation, other appropriate Federal agencies and private entities to research and develop new technologies for securing covered transportation; measurable goals, including objectives, mechanisms, and a schedule for enhancing the security of covered transportation. Castle's legislation requires the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to work with other federal agencies to come up with a timeline for developing a comprehensive national rail security policy that is enforceable and capable of accurately assessing a rail

system's vulnerabilities.

- Authorizes operating and capital costs associated with security awareness, preparedness, and response training, and training developed by universities and institutions of higher education as well as nonprofit employee labor organizations, for front-line railroad employees. Castle's legislation would authorize grants for mandatory rail worker security training programs to prepare front-line employees for potential threat conditions.

- Authorizes funding for surveillance equipment, communications equipment, Public Awareness campaigns for enhanced rail security, chemical, biological, radiological, or explosive detection, including canine patrols for such detection, and security improvements to passenger railroad stations and other railroad transportation infrastructure. Castle's legislation authorizes grants for more police and security officers, canine units, communications systems, and surveillance technology.

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