

Rep. Bilirakis Scores Legislative Victories in 9/11 Security Bill

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The bill, which already passed the Senate, includes two important measures proposed by Florida Congressman and House Homeland Security Committee Member Gus Bilirakis (R-Palm Harbor). These two provisions, which address public transportation and rail security, signifies Rep. Bilirakis's first freshman congressional legislative accomplishments to become law. President Bush is expected to sign the legislation.

"I am pleased that the conference report includes two proposals I made that were originally included in the rail and public transportation security bill the House passed earlier this year," Bilirakis said. "Rail security and safety of our public transportation systems in America need serious attention and these provisions, along with the others included in this bill, will help make America safer."

The first provision will require those who are coordinating the development and implementation of rail security plans to be American citizens. The second requires the physical testing of rail tank cars used to carry hazardous materials in order to make them more resistant to a terror attack.

Congressman Bilirakis also hailed the addition in the Conference Report of a Republican provision that protects from lawsuits those who in good faith report suspected terrorist activity. Not included in the original House-passed version of H.R. 1, Bilirakis said of the provision, "It is very good that this common-sense proposal to provide civil immunity to Good Samaritans who report suspicious activity is now included in this measure."

Among its many provisions, H.R. 1 would also provide \$4 billion over four years for rail and public transportation security, change the formula for distributing federal security grants towards a more risk-based model, establish a new interoperability grant program to improve communication between local, state and federal officials, and mandate 100 percent screening of container cargo entering the U.S. by 2012.

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