

## Legislative Bulletin.....January 14, 2009

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**H.Res. 40**—Amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to require each standing committee to hold periodic hearings on the topic of waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement in Government programs which that committee may authorize.

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### **H.Res. 40 — Amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to require each standing committee to hold periodic hearings on the topic of waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement in Government programs which that committee may authorize. (Tanner, D-TN)**

**Order of Business:** The resolution is scheduled to be considered on January 14, 2008 under a motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill.

**Summary:** In general, H.Res. 40 amends House rules to require committees to hold periodic hearings on the topic of waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement in government programs. More specifically:

- The resolution would require each standing committee of the House (or a subcommittee under the committee) to hold at least one hearing during each 120-day period that the House is in session on waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement in government programs.
- The resolution directs committees to focus on “*the most egregious instances of waste, fraud, abuse, or mismanagement*” as documented by the Federal Office of the Inspector General or the Comptroller General of the United States.
- The resolution requires that each committee hold at least one hearing on reports issued by the Comptroller General that contain information on federal programs, under the jurisdiction of the committee, that are at high risk for waste, fraud, and mismanagement.

**Additional Background:** The following are some examples of what might be considered “wasteful spending” by some conservatives.

- **Essential Air Service (EAS):** Spending under this program can subsidize [up to 93%](#) of the cost of flights that are sometimes more empty than full.
- **Medicare Fraud:** In 2006, GAO told Congress that [27,000 health providers](#) owe \$2 billion in back taxes to the IRS. But the providers were still receiving Medicare payments.

- **Medicare Fraud:** Since 2000, the Washington Post reports that medical suppliers billed [Medicare for up to \\$92 million](#) for wheelchairs and home equipment that was prescribed by dead physicians.
- **Ireland Fund:** Last year, Congress provided \$15 million for the [International Fund for Ireland](#). This program provides aid to the second richest country in the world (\$43,600 per capita GDP).
- **Amtrak:** Last year, Congress provided \$1.3 billion for Amtrak subsidies. The average Amtrak train is not even half full.
- **Medicare Durable Medical Equipment:** Last year, the federal government spent [\\$1 billion](#) more than necessary on durable medical equipment because of delays to a program that would provide competitive bidding.
- **\$3.4 Billion Annual Cost of Car Fleet:** The federal government owns more than [642,000 vehicles](#) that cost taxpayers more than \$3.4 billion a year to maintain, operate, and fuel.
- **\$14.8 Billion for Travel Expenses:** The federal government spent [\\$14.8 billion](#) in 2007, up from \$14.1 billion in 2006, on travel expenses such as airline flights, rental cars, and hotels.
- **Federal Employees Earn Nearly Twice Amount of Private-Sector Employees:** In 2007, the federal government's \$1.8 million civilian employees received an average of [\\$116,450](#) in compensation. By point of comparison, the average private sector employee received only \$57,615.

**RSC Bonus Fact:** CBO now projects that federal spending in FY 2009 will be \$3.54 trillion or 24.9% of GDP—the highest level in American history outside of World War II. The deficit is projected to be \$1.186 trillion or 8.3% of GDP, also the highest figure in American history excepting World War II.

**Committee Action:** None.

**Administration Position:** No Statement of Administration Policy (SAP) is available.

**Cost to Taxpayers:** The resolution would not authorize any additional expenditures.

**Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government?:** No.

**Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates?:** No.

**Does the Bill Comply with House Rules Regarding Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?:** Though the bill contains no earmarks, and there's no accompanying committee report, the earmarks rule (House Rule XXI, Clause 9(a)) does not apply, by definition, to legislation considered under suspension of the rules.

**Constitutional Authority:** No committee report citing constitutional authority is available.

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