

[H.R. 3578, DHS Science and Technology Reform and Improvement Act of 2015, as amended](#)

FLOOR SITUATION

On Thursday, December 10, 2015, the House will consider [H.R. 3578](#), *the DHS Science and Technology Reform and Improvement Act of 2015, as amended*, under suspension of the rules. H.R. 3578 was introduced on September 18, 2015 by Rep. John Ratcliffe (R-TX) and was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security, which ordered the bill reported, as amended, by voice vote, on September 30, 2015.

SUMMARY

H.R. 3578 includes provisions designed to improve how the Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) carries out its activities and conducts homeland security research and development.

Specifically, the bill:

- Establishes S&T's mission as the primary research, development, testing, and evaluation arm of the Department, responsible for coordinating the research, development, testing, and evaluation of the Department to strengthen the security and resiliency of the United States;
- Ensures that the Under Secretary for Science and Technology serves as the senior scientific advisor to the Secretary;
- Codifies the Directorate's portfolio review process to engage key leadership and stakeholders in ensuring research and development meet S&T and DHS goals and objectives;
- Requires the Under Secretary, within one year of enactment, to develop and submit to Congress a strategy to guide S&T's activities. The strategy must be updated at least once every five years and shall identify priorities and objectives for the development of science and technology solutions and capabilities addressing homeland security operational needs;

- Requires the Under Secretary, within one year of enactment, to develop, and update at least once every five years, a five-year research and development plan for the activities of the Directorate and specifies the plan's required contents;
- Requires the Under Secretary to establish and utilize a system to track the progress of the research, development, testing, and evaluation activities undertaken by the Directorate and establishes requirements for the system;
- Requires S&T to establish a process to define, identify, prioritize, fund, and task the basic and applied homeland security research and development activities of the Directorate and create solutions with researchers and the private sector;
- Requires cyber research and development to include technologies for sharing of information , analytics, and methodologies related to cybersecurity risks and incidents;
- Directs the establishment of a Homeland Security Science and Technology Fellows Program to facilitate the placement of fellows in relevant scientific or technological fields for up to two years in Department components and offices with a need for scientific and technological expertise; and,
- Requires activities authorized by the bill to be carried-out using amounts otherwise appropriated for these purposes.

BACKGROUND

The Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate "monitors evolving technology and threats and capitalizes on technological advancements at a rapid pace, developing solutions and bridging capability gaps at a pace that mirrors the speed of life."¹ S&T's mission is "to deliver effective and innovative insight, methods and solutions for the critical needs of the Homeland Security Enterprise."² S&T conducts basic and applied research, development, demonstration, testing and evaluation activities relevant to DHS.

According to the bill's sponsor, "Threats and technologies are always changing. The DHS Science and Technology Directorate monitors those threats and utilizes technological advancements to develop and deliver solutions in order to prepare for future challenges and the critical needs of the DHS components. In light of DHS S&T's challenges, this legislation would make important improvements on how it conducts research and development. This legislation also defines a clear mission statement for DHS S&T and requires the Directorate to conduct portfolio reviews, a process that engages key leadership and stakeholders, to ensure research and development meets Directorate and Department goals and objectives."³

¹ <http://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/about-st>

² Id.

³ See [Opening Statement](#) of Subcommittee Chairman John Ratcliffe, September 17, 2015.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) that the new program would cost about \$1 million annually. Based on the cost of similar reports, CBO also estimates that it would cost GAO less than \$500,000 to prepare the report required by the bill. Such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds. Because enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information please contact [Jerry White](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 5-0190.