

## Rothman Helps Pass Bill To Create Department of Homeland Security

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Congressman Cites Need To Reorganize Government To Better Protect Americans

Washington, DC - Recognizing the pressing need for the federal government to reorganize itself to better defend Americans from acts of terrorism, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today helped pass a sweeping measure that creates a Department of Homeland Security. In a move that constitutes the largest reorganization of the federal government since World War II, the measure combines 170,000 workers from 22 different security-related agencies that are currently spread throughout different departments of the federal government.

"Today, my colleagues and I in the United States Congress took a major step forward in our efforts to reshape the federal government in a way that better serves and protects the American people," Rothman said. "While it will be a very large undertaking to get the new Department of Homeland Security up and running, once established, it will better coordinate our efforts to secure our nation on the federal, state, and local levels."

Under the measure, agencies that currently deal with border security, bioterrorism defenses, and disaster management would be consolidated into the Department of Homeland Security. The Department will be divided into four divisions: border and transportation security; emergency preparedness and response; science and technology; and information analysis and infrastructure protections. The Secret Service will be transferred from the Treasury Department to the Department of Homeland Security, but will not be placed within any of the four divisions.

The bill also establishes an Office of Domestic Preparedness into a FEMA division. That office will be responsible for managing federal grant programs to train state and local first responders, coordinating state and local terrorism response preparedness activities and equipment, conducting response training exercises, and developing communications systems that will allow emergency responders to communicate with one another.

"Government's first responsibility is to protect the people," Rothman said. "Today's creation of a Department of Homeland Security demonstrates the United States Congress's bipartisan commitment to protecting the American people through whatever means necessary, including the reorganization of the federal government."

In July, Rothman voted for the original House version of the Homeland Security bill which stalled in the Senate. The Homeland Security measure which passed today is very similar to that original House bill. Following Senate approval, which is expected next week, the final bill moves to the White House where President Bush is expected to sign it into law.

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