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King and Homeland Security Republicans Demand Answers on “Rightwing Extremism” Report

Members ask for hearing on role of DHS Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties in report’s production

Washington, D.C. (Friday, April 17, 2009)— Today, U.S. Rep. Peter T. King (R-NY), Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security and Republican members of the Committee sent a letter to Chairman Bennie Thompson requesting a Committee hearing and investigation on the recently released Department of Homeland Security report entitled, “Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment.”

“This committee must learn all the facts about how this report was developed, researched and approved,” King said.. “My staff’s ongoing internal investigation has shown that the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties did, in fact, weigh in on the report and voiced several concerns about its contents—but not all the recommended changes were included prior to dissemination of the report. This intra-departmental disconnect is disturbing, and is an issue that must be addressed immediately by the Secretary.”

“I hope that we can work with Chairman Thompson to hold a hearing as soon as possible. Mr. Thompson has made protecting privacy and civil liberties a hallmark of his work on this Committee and has recently expressed his concern about this report in a letter to Secretary Napolitano. The release of this report as well as the nature of its contents demands thorough bipartisan oversight from the Committee on Homeland Security.”

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