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King details consequences of Democrats' misplaced homeland security priorities
Leadership report blasts "Democrats' War on American Jobs," cites "Flying Imams" and unrealistic cargo inspection mandate

Washington, D.C. (Wednesday, December 5, 2007)—Today, U.S. Rep. Peter T. King (R-NY), Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, discussed the disastrous security and economic consequences of several of the Democrats' misplaced homeland security priorities, including their opposition to the so-called "Flying Imams" amendment and their unrealistic cargo scanning mandate. A House Republican Leadership report released earlier today—entitled "Democrats' War on American Jobs"—cited both these issues as evidence of House Democrats' careless domestic and fiscal leadership.

"Unfortunately, in several instances, House Democrats seem to be more concerned with scoring political points than actually working to better secure our nation," King said. "The consequences of these misplaced priorities could prove disastrous, in terms of both security and economic loss."

King led House Republican efforts to include John Doe Protections in the 9/11 bill in response to the "Flying Imams." The King amendment, which was included in the final bill despite vehement opposition from House and Senate Democrats, shields terrorism tipsters from frivolous lawsuits such as those filed by the Imams. The Leadership report notes that the Democrats' approach "would lead to more frivolous lawsuits, increased costs for employers, small businesses, and their employees, and potentially cost thousands of jobs in the transportation industry."

"This was a huge win—a hard-fought victory for House Republicans and, more importantly, for the American people," King said. "In a post-9/11 reality, vigilance is essential to security. Despite Democratic opposition, common sense prevailed and our country is safer because of it."

The Leadership report also blasts House Democrats for requiring unrealistic scanning of U.S.-bound port cargo by 2012, stating that this untested mandate would severely hamper international trade and potentially cost up to 71,261 American jobs *per day*.

King noted that the scanning issue had already been addressed by the Republican-led 109th Congress, which passed the SAFE Port Act in September 2006. This landmark port security bill

included a pilot program to determine the feasibility of scanning and inspections of all inbound port cargo.

“The economic consequences of the Democrats’ ill-conceived scanning mandate could be disastrous,” King said. “Requiring unrealistic scanning of all port containers before the technology is available would have a devastating effect on the economy, potentially costing us hundreds of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars.”

House Democrats repeatedly used the scanning/inspection argument during 2006 in an attempt to portray Republicans as weak on port security. This prompted even the Washington Post editorial board to speak out against the effort: “*inspect 100 percent of containers’ is a slogan, not a solution, and we hope lawmakers resist the temptation to use it in the election season to come,*” (Washington Post, June 1, 2006).

“What I cannot understand is, why not wait for the results of the pilot program? That was the intent of the bipartisan bill we wrote in 2006,” King said. “Mandating total inspection before we know it’s even possible is irresponsible, even reckless; requiring an impossible goal will only serve to weaken our security and our economy.”

The “Democrats’ War on American Jobs” report can be viewed here:

<http://republicanleader.house.gov/UploadedFiles/Democrats%20War%20on%20American%20Jobs%20Report.pdf>

More information is also available at: <http://republicanleader.house.gov/waronjobs/>

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