



The Daily Whip

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THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2005

House Meets At...	Last Vote Predicted At...
10:00 a.m.: Legislative Business Ten "One Minutes" Per Side	3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

FLOOR SCHEDULE AND BILL SUMMARY

H.R. 1544 – Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act of 2005 (*Rep. Cox – Homeland Security*) (Subject to a Rule). This bill changes the distribution of certain first responder grants --- the State Homeland Security Grant Program, the Urban Area Security Initiative, and the Law Enforcement Terrorist Prevention program --- to require that they be distributed primarily based on threat levels. To be eligible for these grants, state governments (or a designated region or eligible Indian tribe) must develop a 3-year homeland security plan for enhancing their preparedness and response capabilities, and to forward at least 80% of the funds to local entities within 45 days of receiving them. HR 1544 establishes a First Responder Grant Board to evaluate and prioritize all covered grant applications --- taking into account measures to lessen the threat to, vulnerability of, and consequences for, people and critical infrastructure from a terrorist attack. Under HR 1544, each state would receive at least 0.25% of the total amount distributed, while states that have an international border, or that are on a body of water with an international border, would receive at least 0.45%. Currently, every state is guaranteed a minimum of 0.75% of the funds appropriated for the three grant programs. This bill was reported out of the Homeland Security Committee by voice vote on April 28th.

The Rules Committee has recommended a restrictive rule that provides one hour of general debate and provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. The Rule also makes in order 5 amendments:

- **Berry Amendment #12 (10 minutes).** To add the Administrator of Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to the First Responder Grants Board.
- **Berry Amendment #11 (20 minutes).** To require the Department of Homeland Security to coordinate with State, local, and tribal governments in establishing criteria for prioritizing applications for first responder grants.
- **Bass/Norwood Amendment (20 minutes).** To allow States to petition the Secretary of Homeland Security to use Federal homeland security funds for the cost of any activity relating to prevention of, preparation for, response to, or recovery from acts of terrorism, that would otherwise be a Federal duty performed by Federal agencies and under agreement with the State or local government and a Federal agency.
- **Weiner Amendment (20 minutes).** To limit the number of Urban Area Security Initiative grants during any given fiscal year to 50.
- **Castle Amendment (20 minutes).** To provide civil liability protections --- by raising the liability standard from negligence to gross negligence--- to any person or government who donates fire equipment to a volunteer fire department.

TOMORROW'S OUTLOOK

The GOP Leadership has announced the following schedule: on Friday, no votes are expected in the House.

Daily Quote...

"On Tuesday, when it received a federal bankruptcy court's permission to terminate its pension plans, United Airlines became the biggest pension defaulter in the history of corporate America. . . The United debacle also holds a broader lesson about retirement security. The level of risk that exists in pensions and other retirement savings plans has no place in the core tier of retirement savings, Social Security. If lawmakers and policy makers are not yet convinced of that, they should talk to the people at United."

- *The New York Times*, in an editorial today