

EDOLPHUS TOWNS, NEW YORK,  
CHAIRMAN

PAUL E. KANJORSKI, PENNSYLVANIA  
CAROLYN B. MALONEY, NEW YORK  
ELJAH E. CUMMINGS, MARYLAND  
DENNIS J. KUCINICH, OHIO  
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS  
WM. LACY CLAY, MISSOURI  
DIANE E. WATSON, CALIFORNIA  
STEPHEN F. LYNCH, MASSACHUSETTS  
JIM COOPER, TENNESSEE  
GERRY E. CONNOLLY, VIRGINIA  
MIKE QUIGLEY, ILLINOIS  
MARCY KAPTUR, OHIO  
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON,  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
PATRICK J. KENNEDY, RHODE ISLAND  
DANNY K. DAVIS, ILLINOIS  
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, MARYLAND  
HENRY CUELLAR, TEXAS  
PAUL W. HODES, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY, CONNECTICUT  
PETER WELCH, VERMONT  
BILL FOSTER, ILLINOIS  
JACKIE SPEIER, CALIFORNIA  
STEVE DRIEHAUS, OHIO

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051  
FACSIMILE (202) 225-4784  
MINORITY (202) 225-5074

[www.oversight.house.gov](http://www.oversight.house.gov)

DARRELL E. ISSA, CALIFORNIA,  
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

DAN BURTON, INDIANA  
JOHN L. MICA, FLORIDA  
MARK E. SOUDER, INDIANA  
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TENNESSEE  
MICHAEL R. TURNER, OHIO  
LYNN A. WESTMORELAND, GEORGIA  
PATRICK T. McHENRY, NORTH CAROLINA  
BRIAN P. BILBRAY, CALIFORNIA  
JIM JORDAN, OHIO  
JEFF FLAKE, ARIZONA  
JEFF FORTENBERRY, NEBRASKA  
JASON CHAFFETZ, UTAH  
AARON SCHOCK, ILLINOIS  
BLAINE LUETKEMEYER, MISSOURI

October 7, 2009

William J. Bosanko  
Director  
Information Security Oversight Office  
The National Archives Building  
700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20408

Dear Mr. Bosanko:

The Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is conducting an investigation into the government contractor industry's ("Industry") transition from substandard storage containers to GSA-approved storage containers for classified documents. The Operating Manual for the National Industrial Security Program provides that GSA-approved security containers shall be used to store Top Secret and Secret-level material, except that certain substandard security containers may be used until October 1, 2012 for Secret-level material, as long as supplemental security controls are also utilized.

I understand that most government agencies have completed or are on track to complete the transition to GSA-approved security containers by the 2012 deadline. However, I am concerned that Industry has not made sufficient progress and is currently not on track to complete the transition on time. According to the Defense Security Service (DSS), Industry currently uses almost 20,000 substandard security containers that will need to be upgraded within the next three years. Based on Industry's slow rate of transition over the past decade, and the substantial number of substandard security containers still in use, it appears that Industry may not have adequate plans in place to complete the transition by October 1, 2012.

As you know, regulations promulgated in 1997 mandated that both Industry and government agencies complete the transition to GSA-approved locks for Secret-level information by October 1, 2002. That deadline was later extended by a decade, in part due to Industry complaints that it could not meet the deadline. In other words, Industry has been on notice for almost 14 years of its regulatory obligation to upgrade its security containers.

William J. Bosanko

October 7, 2009

Page 2

I am also concerned that the U.S. government may be paying for supplemental security controls (namely, “gates, guards, and guns”) required in conjunction with non-GSA approved security containers but that are not required for GSA-approved security containers. According to the Information Security Oversight Office, Industry spends over \$1.2 billion annually to protect classified information. A significant portion of this cost may be due to supplemental security controls that would not be required if Industry made the relatively modest investment to upgrade to GSA-approved security containers. In short: Industry may be charging the U.S. government on an ongoing basis for supplemental security costs that would not be necessary if it upgraded its security containers.

I request that the Information Security Oversight Office and the National Industrial Security Program Advisory Committee inquire into the status of both government agencies’ and Industry’s transition to GSA-approved storage containers, obtain feedback from government agencies and Industry members on their plans to complete the transition, and report back to the Subcommittee on your findings. Independently, the Subcommittee will be making direct inquiries of select government agencies and contractors currently using substandard security containers. In addition, I have requested that DSS conduct its own review of Industry progress.

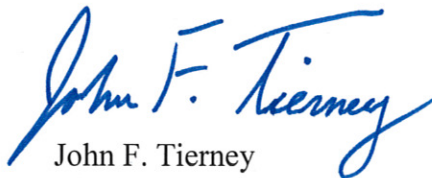
The secure storage of classified information is a matter of paramount importance to the national security of the United States. Long ago, the National Industrial Security Program determined that existing substandard security containers are simply inadequate for the task. As such, both government and Industry are required to upgrade their security containers by 2012. In my capacity as Chairman of the Subcommittee with jurisdiction for oversight of national security matters, I will insist that both government and Industry are held accountable for meeting that deadline.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee in the House of Representatives and has broad oversight jurisdiction, as set forth in House Rule X, to investigate “any matter” within its legislative jurisdiction as well as the jurisdictions of any other standing House Committees (House Rule X, clause 4(c)(2)). Pursuant to Committee Rule 8(a)(5), the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs has jurisdiction encompassing oversight of national security, homeland security, and foreign affairs.

William J. Bosanko  
October 7, 2009  
Page 3

I appreciate your cooperation in this important matter. Please contact Scott Lindsay or Andy Wright on the Subcommittee staff at (202) 225-2548 with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John F. Tierney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

John F. Tierney  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on National Security  
and Foreign Affairs

cc: Rep. Edolphus Towns  
Chairman  
Committee on Oversight  
and Government Reform

Rep. Darrell Issa  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight  
and Government Reform

Rep. Jeff Flake  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on National Security  
and Foreign Affairs