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House Intelligence Committee Holds Hearing on Unauthorized Disclosure of Classified Information

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence held a hearing on unauthorized disclosure of classified information, the first in a series of hearings the committee will hold on the subject. Today’s hearing focused on the repercussions and consequences of unauthorized disclosure, with testimony provided by a representative of the intelligence community.

“We can no longer turn a blind eye toward unauthorized disclosure by people with access to classified information,” said U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee. “Today we heard how bad this problem is and how much damage it causes. Unauthorized disclosure not only threatens our sources and methods, it costs taxpayers substantial sums, and in the worst cases, it has cost people their lives.”

Hoekstra said the committee has long-planned to look into the issue of unauthorized disclosure. He pointed to the Intelligence Authorization bill, approved by the House, which expresses some of the committee’s concerns in its unclassified portion.

He also gave a speech in July where he laid out several issues the committee will cover as part of its review. Among the topics he discussed were the public’s right to know, whether too much information is classified, and the rights and responsibilities of reporters who cover national security issues.

“This is a serious matter encompassing a number of issues and concerns,” Hoekstra said. “We will conduct our review in a thoughtful, nonpartisan manner that includes input from the public, media and a broad range of perspectives.”

Hoekstra went on to say that while some parts of the review necessarily will be closed, the committee will hold open hearings on the issue in the future. He also said that no legislation on unauthorized disclosure is pending before the committee and that no decision has been made to introduce a bill.

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