

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6575

To require the Archivist of the United States to promulgate regulations to prevent the over-classification of information, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 23, 2008

Mr. WAXMAN (for himself and Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

A BILL

To require the Archivist of the United States to promulgate regulations to prevent the over-classification of information, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Over-Classification Re-
5 duction Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

7 The purpose of this Act is to increase Government-
8 wide information sharing and the availability of informa-

1 tion to the public by applying standards and practices to
2 reduce improper classification.

3 **SEC. 3. OVER-CLASSIFICATION PREVENTION WITHIN THE**
4 **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.**

5 (a) ARCHIVIST RESPONSIBILITIES.—

6 (1) REGULATIONS.—The Archivist of the
7 United States, in coordination with the Director of
8 National Intelligence and the heads of other affected
9 Federal agencies, shall promulgate regulations to
10 prevent the over-classification of information.

11 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—The regulations under
12 this subsection shall—

13 (A) identify specific thresholds, stand-
14 ards, and requirements to prevent the over-
15 classification of information, including for de-
16 termining—

17 (i) when classified products should be
18 prepared in a standard format; and

19 (ii) when classified products should be
20 prepared in an unclassified format; taking
21 into consideration whether an unclassified
22 product would reasonably be expected to be
23 of any benefit to a State, local, tribal or
24 territorial government, law enforcement

1 agency, or other emergency response pro-
2 vider, the private sector, or the public;

3 (B) ensure that compliance with this Act
4 protects national security and privacy rights;
5 and

6 (C) establish requirements for Federal
7 agencies to implement, subject to chapter 71 of
8 title 5, United States Code, including the fol-
9 lowing:

10 (i) A process whereby employees may
11 challenge without retribution classification
12 decisions by agency employees or contrac-
13 tors and be rewarded with specific incen-
14 tives for successful challenges resulting
15 in—

16 (I) the removal of improper clas-
17 sification markings; or

18 (II) the correct application of ap-
19 propriate classification markings.

20 (ii) A method for informing employees
21 and contractors that repeated failure to
22 comply with the regulations promulgated
23 under this section could subject them to a
24 series of penalties.

1 (iii) Penalties for employees and con-
2 tractors who repeatedly fail to comply with
3 the regulations promulgated under this
4 section after having received both notice of
5 their noncompliance and appropriate train-
6 ing or re-training to address such non-
7 compliance.

8 (3) CONSULTATION.—In promulgating the reg-
9 ulations, the Archivist shall consult with the heads
10 of Federal agencies and with representatives of
11 State, local, tribal, and territorial governments; law
12 enforcement entities; organizations with expertise in
13 civil rights, employee and labor rights, civil liberties,
14 and government oversight; and the private sector, as
15 appropriate.

16 (4) DEADLINE.—The regulations under this
17 subsection shall be promulgated in final form not
18 later than one year after the date of the enactment
19 of this Act.

20 (b) INSPECTOR GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES.—The
21 Inspector General of each Federal agency, in consultation
22 with the Archivist, the Director of National Intelligence,
23 and the heads of other affected Federal agencies, shall
24 randomly audit classified information from each compo-
25 nent of the agency with employees that have classification

1 authority. In conducting any such audit, the Inspector
2 General shall—

3 (1) assess, on an individualized basis, whether
4 applicable classification policies, procedures, rules,
5 and regulations have been followed;

6 (2) describe any problems with the administra-
7 tion of the applicable classification policies, proce-
8 dures, rules, and regulations, including specific non-
9 compliance issues;

10 (3) recommend improvements in awareness and
11 training to address them; and

12 (4) report to Congress, the Archivist, and the
13 public, in an appropriate format, on the findings of
14 the Inspector General’s audits under this section.

15 **SEC. 4. ENFORCEMENT OF OVER-CLASSIFICATION PREVEN-**
16 **TION WITHIN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.**

17 (a) **PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS.**—

18 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—For purposes described in
19 paragraph (2), the Archivist of the United States
20 shall require that, at the time of classification of in-
21 formation, the following shall appear on the informa-
22 tion:

23 (A) The name or personal identifier of the
24 employee or contractor classifying the informa-
25 tion.

1 (B) The agency, office, and position of the
2 employee or contractor.

3 (2) PURPOSES.—The purposes described in this
4 paragraph are as follows:

5 (A) To identify and address over-classifica-
6 tion problems, including the classification of in-
7 formation that should not be classified.

8 (B) To assess the information sharing im-
9 pact of any such problems.

10 (b) TRAINING.—The Archivist, subject to chapter 71
11 of title 5, United States Code, and in coordination with
12 the Director of National Intelligence and the heads of
13 other affected Federal agencies, shall—

14 (1) require annual training for each employee
15 or contractor of a Federal agency with classification
16 authority and who is responsible for analysis, dis-
17 semination, preparation, production, receiving, pub-
18 lishing, or otherwise communicating written classi-
19 fied information, including training to educate each
20 employee or contractor about—

21 (A) the prevention of overclassification of
22 information;

23 (B) the proper use of classification mark-
24 ings, including portion markings; and

1 (C) the consequences of over-classification
2 and other repeated improper uses of classifica-
3 tion markings, including the misapplication of
4 classification markings to information that does
5 not merit such markings, and of failing to com-
6 ply with the policies and procedures established
7 under or pursuant to this section, including the
8 negative consequences for the individual's per-
9 sonnel evaluation, information sharing, and the
10 overall success of the agency's missions; and

11 (2) ensure that such program is conducted effi-
12 ciently, in conjunction with any other security, intel-
13 ligence, or other training programs required by the
14 agency to reduce the costs and administrative bur-
15 dens associated with the additional training required
16 by this section.

17 (c) DETAILEE PROGRAM.—

18 (1) REQUIREMENT FOR PROGRAM.—The Archi-
19 vist, subject to chapter 71 of title 5, United States
20 Code, shall implement a detailee program to detail
21 Federal agency personnel, on a nonreimbursable
22 basis, to the National Archives and Records Admin-
23 istration for one year, for the purpose of—

24 (A) training and educational benefit for
25 the agency personnel assigned so that they may

1 better understand the policies, procedures and
2 laws governing classification authorities;

3 (B) bolstering the ability of the National
4 Archives and Records Administration to con-
5 duct its oversight authorities over agencies; and

6 (C) ensuring that the policies and proce-
7 dures established by the agencies remain con-
8 sistent with those established by the Archivist
9 of the United States.

10 (2) SUNSET OF DETAILEE PROGRAM.—Except
11 as otherwise provided by law, this subsection shall
12 cease to have effect on December 31, 2012.

13 **SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.**

14 In this Act:

15 (1) INFORMATION.—The term “information” means
16 any communicable knowledge or documentary material,
17 regardless of its physical form or characteristics, that is
18 owned by, is produced by or for, or is under the control
19 of the Federal Government.

20 (2) FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term “Federal agency”
21 means—

22 (A) any Executive agency, as that term is de-
23 fined in section 105 of title 5, United States Code;

24 (B) any military department, as that term is
25 defined in section 102 of such title; and

1 (C) any other entity within the executive branch
2 that comes into the possession of classified informa-
3 tion.

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