



Construction Industry Round Table

Press Release

A force for positive change in the design / construction industry

Senate Urged to Support the Strong Private-Public Sector Relationship by Rejecting the "Abercrombie Amendment" in the DoD Authorization Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C.--September 27, 2001--In light of the events of September 11th, the Senate's consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2002 (S. 1155) has taken on added importance for the design and construction community, especially with respect to maintaining the private sector's traditional partnership role with the military in order to deliver on its mission.

The Round Table and other design and construction industry groups have been alarmed by an amendment that was attached to the House version of the DoD Authorization bill during committee mark-up by Rep. Neil Abercrombie (D-1st-HI) that holds the potential of prohibiting or severely curtailing DoD contracting-out to the private sector. Industry groups contend that the so-called "Abercrombie Amendment," [which resembles in purpose and language the controversial Truthfulness, Responsibility, and Accountability in Contracting (TRAC) Act (H.R. 721)], is ill-conceived and disingenuous and would, if enacted, delay or possibly block the Department of Defense from contracting out for goods and services needed to support the armed forces.

"This is not the time to disrupt the strong private-public sector relations that exist, nor is it the time to divert military personnel from their core mission simply to undertake private sector jobs that create work for thousands of individuals in support of their country and its military" contended Construction Industry Round Table (CIRT) President, Mark A. Casso, in a letter to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Proponents, on the other hand, claim the contracting restrictions exclude architectural and engineering services. However, CIRT and other organizations find the language so ambiguous and poorly defined as to be highly suspect and problematic. Further, they contend that the proposal runs counter to both standing statutory direction, and the Bush Administration's stated policy goals with respect to contracting-out activities. [The Administration testified before the House on June 28th in opposition to the TRAC bill and its implications for government contracting].

Based on CIRT's analysis and views of the proposal, it has urged the Senate to oppose any efforts to add the "Abercrombie Amendment" to the Senate DoD Authorization bill, either in committee or on the floor.