

Tom Udall

U.S. Representative

Third Congressional District

NEWS RELEASE

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**UDALL WELCOMES BUSH'S PROPOSAL TO
CREATE NEW DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND
SECURITY**

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Tom Udall (D-NM) is hailing news that President Bush will propose creation of a new, Cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security. Udall - an early supporter of such a proposal - vowed to support creation of such an agency.

"President Bush is moving in the right direction with the creation of a new, Cabinet-level agency to oversee homeland security functions. This new agency will mark the most significant reorganization of government in a half a century, providing over-arching coordination for the diverse homeland security responsibilities currently spread over more than 100 different agencies," Udall said. "I welcome the President's long overdue move in proposing this new agency, and will work with my colleagues to see this proposal through the House, once it has been thoroughly reviewed."

The President will announce his proposal Thursday evening in an 6:00 p.m. (Mountain) webcast at www.whitehouse.gov and on television. The new department will be comprised of four separate divisions to oversee Border and Transportation security; Emergency Preparedness and Response; Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Countermeasures; and Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection. In preparing its plan, the Administration included the best aspects of various plans advanced by outside studies and commissions, and by members of the House and Senate.

"Importantly, this new agency will provide the budget and statutory authority I believe the Homeland Security director needs to demonstrate the continuity of resolve that must characterize our fight against terrorism for the long term," Udall said. "This also means that the Cabinet secretary will be subject to Senate confirmation, and will be held accountable by Congress."

The President's proposed Department of Homeland Security will strengthen coordination of homeland security in a single department:

- One department whose primary mission is to protect the American homeland;
- One department to secure the nation's borders, transportation sector, ports, and critical infrastructure;
- One department to synthesize and analyze homeland security intelligence from multiple sources;
- One department to coordinate communications with state and local governments, private industry, and the American people about threats and preparedness;
- One department to coordinate our efforts to protect the American people against bioterrorism and other weapons of mass destruction;
- One department to help train and equip for first responders;
- One department to manage federal emergency response activities; and
- More security workers in the field working to stop terrorists and fewer resources in Washington managing duplicative and redundant activities that drain critical homeland security resources.

"We must leave no stone unturned in our effort to prevent acts of terrorism. Now that the President has advanced a plan, we need to speed this process along, working out any differences as this legislation progresses toward enactment. Congress has wisely acted on many matters of importance with regard to homeland security. Now, we need to provide needed authority to this department to lend stability, predictability, and priority to our homeland security efforts," Udall concluded.

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