

## Panel Ponders Controlled Documents

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Improving Public  
Access Act would free controlled unclassified info

The House Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment Wednesday will hear from several witnesses in favor of providing more public access to federal documents through the Improving Public Access to Documents Act of 2008 (HR 6193).

Caroline Fredrickson, director of the Washington Legislative Office of The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), will tell the committee Americans should have reasonable access to any unclassified documents created by the US federal government, according to ACLU. The Improving Public Access to Documents Act would require the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to promulgate rules to regulate federal control of unclassified documentation, providing appropriate circulation of documents to the public and the private sector as well as to state, local and tribal governments.

The ACLU holds that DHS and other federal agencies have been far too secretive with information since 9/11. The nonprofit contends that the government categorizes too much documentation as controlled unclassified information, thereby withholding it from public view without justification.

After that hearing, the subcommittee will reconvene to mark up the Improving Public Access to Documents Act along with several other bills, including the Homeland Security Open Source Information Enhancement Act of 2007 (HR 3815), the Reducing Over-Classification Act of 2007 (HR 4806), and the Personnel Reimbursement for Intelligence Cooperation and Enhancement (PRICE) of Homeland Security Act (HR 6098).