

H.R. 4487, Public Buildings Reform and Savings Act

FLOOR SITUATION

On Monday, May 23, 2016, the House will consider [H.R. 4487](#), the Public Buildings Reform and Savings Act, under a suspension of the rules. H.R. 4487 was introduced on February, 2016, by Rep. Lou Barletta (R-PA) and was referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, which ordered the bill reported, as amended, by voice vote on March 2, 2016.

SUMMARY

H.R. 4487 reforms and makes improvements to the General Services Administration (GSA) and the Federal Protective Service (FPS). Major provisions in the bill include:

Leasing Pilot Program—The bill directs the GSA to establish and conduct a pilot program through 2021 to execute lease agreements using alternative procedures to reduce costs of leased space and significantly reduce or eliminate the backlog of expiring leases over the next five years. In addition, the bill authorizes the GSA to submit consolidated prospectuses for leases and projects to Congress for approval.

Exchange Authority—The bill requires approval by congressional resolution of any costs and expenses associated with administering an acquisition by exchange involving real property or in-kind consideration, including services, with a fair market value of \$2.85 million or more.

Federal Protective Service—The bill authorizes the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to authorize contract security personnel to carry firearms, and such personnel to detain individuals without a warrant. DHS must establish minimum and uniform training standards for security personnel.

DHS must report on: the personnel needs of the Federal Protective Service (FPS), including recommendations on the numbers of FPS law enforcement officers needed to carry out the mission of FPS during the 10-year period after the enactment of this Act; and the best method of funding for the FPS.

Zero-Based Space Justification & Project Escalations—The GSA must: (1) justify any need for new or replacement building space, including an explanation of why such space could not be consolidated or co-located into other owned or leased space; (2) notify the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works if the cost, scope, or size of any project changes by 5% or more; and (3) report to such committees on the justification for using three lease rental caps per fiscal year and their impacts in the National Capital Region.

Audit—The Government Accountability Office must conduct biennial audits of the GSA National Broker Contract, conduct a review of the application of enhanced competition requirements, and report on such audits and reviews.

Reduction of Administrative Requirements—The bill amends the Economic Development Administration Reform Act of 1965 to authorize the Department of Commerce to release the federal government's interest in economic adjustment grants not less than seven years after the final disbursement of the grant.

BACKGROUND

The General Services Administration (GSA) is the federal government's primary civilian real property management agency with 11 regional offices.¹ The GSA acquires space on behalf of the federal government through construction, purchase, leases, and other methods, and is responsible for managing, repairing, and maintaining federal properties across the country.

The GSA currently owns or leases over 9,500 real estate assets and maintains an inventory of more than 370 million square feet of workspace for 1.1 million federal employees.² Currently, more than half of GSA's space inventory – 193 million square feet – is in commercially leased space. The annual cost to taxpayers in leased space payments is more than \$5.5 billion.³

In just the next five years, more than half of GSA's commercially leased space will expire – the equivalent of 32 new World Trade Center buildings in New York.⁴ In most major real estate markets, including the National Capital Region where GSA has the largest space footprint, the market remains a buyer's market – high vacancy rates coupled with low rental and interest rates.

The Federal Protective Service (FPS) is responsible for protecting Federal Facilities, their occupants, and visitors by providing protective security services, and leveraging access to the intelligence and information resources of our network of federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector partners.⁵ The FPS protects the homeland by managing risk and ensuring continuity for the people and the nation's Federal Facilities.

Since the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, our country has taken steps to prevent and be better prepared for acts of terrorism and other threats. However, federal buildings remain targets for a number of reasons, including their symbolism and the

¹ See CRS report, "[Authorization of General Services Administration Real Property Projects: Current Process and Proposed Legislation](#)"

² See the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure [Public Buildings and Reform Savings Act of 2016](#)

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ See <https://www.dhs.gov/topic/federal-protective-service>

number of federal employees and visitors that use these facilities, and the protection of these facilities can be improved.⁶

According to the Committee, The Public Buildings Reform and Savings Act of 2016 is bipartisan legislation that provides reforms and improvements to both the agency that operates as the landlord for the civilian federal government, the General Services Administration, and the federal agency charged with providing security at thousands of public buildings and facilities, the Federal Protective Service.⁷

COST

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate is currently unavailable.

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information please contact [Robert Goad](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 6-1831.

⁶ See the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure [Public Buildings and Reform Savings Act of 2016](#)

⁷ *Id.*