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## **Hoekstra Warns National Security Letters Mismanagement Threatens National Security, Civil Liberties**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, today sharply criticized the Justice Department and FBI for their bungled handling of National Security Letters during an open hearing of the House Intelligence Committee.

“We cannot entrust a federal agency to enforce the law if it cannot follow it,” Hoekstra said. “If the Justice Department and its agencies cannot follow the law—a law that provides both for the protection of our nation and our civil liberties—then I fear that a valuable weapon in America’s counterterrorism arsenal could be put at risk.”

Hoekstra called for a full committee hearing to be convened when Justice’s inspector general reported that Congress had not been properly notified of nearly 4,600 NSL requests and that there were 700 instances of inappropriate use of “exigent letters.” Additionally the inspector general reported additional problems with paperwork, requests not being tied to emergencies and that the overall system for NSL accounting was in disarray.

“I am skeptical that we should continue to provide the FBI with some of the tools authorized by the PATRIOT Act until it gets its house in order,” Hoekstra said. “This is a case of bureaucracy run amok and leadership that failed miserably in putting in place proper policies and procedures to ensure the law was followed. It is bookkeeping 101 and clearly they are failing the course.”

Justice Department Inspector General Glenn Fine testified at today’s hearing along with Kenneth Wainstein, assistant attorney general for national security; and John Pistole, deputy director of the F.B.I. The committee also heard from outside witnesses: Jim Dempsey from the Center for Democracy and Technology; Viet Dinh from Georgetown University Law School; and Lisa Graves from the Center for National Security Studies.