

as seed onions and other vegetables. The Massachusetts Central Railroad crossed the northern half of the common in 1887, providing a faster way for Hadley farmers to ship their produce to market. The Connecticut Valley Street Railway lay out along Russell Street about 1900 made local travel to Northampton and Amherst easier.

It was during the late 1800s that, because of labor shortages and a drop in land values, Hadley experienced somewhat of a decline in farming. It was also about this time that a large number of Irish and, later, Polish immigrants that were recruited from Ellis Island for labor purposes settled in Hadley. It was the Polish immigrants that are credited with saving Hadley's farmland as they worked the fine Hadley soil back into fertility. By 1920, asparagus became the popular crop in Hadley, soon making the town the asparagus capital of the world. Most recently, a shipment of Hadley asparagus from Alligator Brook Farm was shipped to former President Bush at the White House in July 2008 after the President had remarked how "fabulous" German asparagus was during his visit with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Once again, Hadley was able to claim its rightful title of "The asparagus capital of the world."

Today, in spite of commercial development along Route 9, Hadley remains largely agricultural and residential. It has the largest number of acres in agriculture in the Pioneer Valley, which includes crops of corn, potatoes, tobacco and scores of other vegetables. Malls and commercial businesses now lie along Russell Street on Route 9 to the east of the town's center.

Hadley is a beautiful place to live. I am proud to represent this town which is rich with history and join with its citizens in celebrating Hadley's 350th Anniversary.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Madam Speaker, I regret that I was unable to participate in a vote on the floor of the House of Representatives yesterday.

The vote was on an amendment offered by Representative MAURICE HINCHEY of New York to H.R. 384, the TARP Reform and Accountability Act. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye" on that question.

H.R. 4156, THE SECURITY CLEARANCE OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Ms. ESHOO. Madam Speaker, today I am proud to introduce the Security Clearance Oversight and Accountability Act. This Act is the result of the work the Subcommittee on Intelligence Community Management of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. I'm pleased, Mr. ISSA, the Ranking

Member of the Subcommittee during the 110th Congress, has again joined me as a co-sponsor of this legislation. I hope we will move this legislation quickly, given the strong bipartisan support that it enjoys. It will improve our insight into the security clearance process, and by doing so, improve the process itself.

Security clearances are the gateway to serving our Nation in national security, homeland security, and many foreign policy positions. Over time, the number of Federal employees and contractors holding clearances has stretched into the hundreds of thousands, clogging the clearance system and creating tremendous backlogs. Following the tragic attacks of September 11, 2001, our country faced an urgent need to expand its national security workforce, but hiring was hampered, and continues to be hampered, by our clearance system. It is imperative, especially as we transition to a new Administration, that security clearances not be a hindrance to our national security.

In 2004, Congress passed the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, IRTPA, which contained many provisions to improve the security clearance process. During the last Congress, our Subcommittee undertook a thorough review of the process and the progress toward meeting the goals of the Act. We had round-table meetings with representatives of industry and representatives of the Intelligence Community agencies. We carefully reviewed all reports submitted in response to the Intelligence Reform Act as well as GAO reports on security clearance reform in the Department of Defense. We held a series of open hearings with Administration witnesses and GAO to discuss accomplishments and areas where progress was lacking and we intend to continue that oversight in the 111th Congress. This bill will assist us in that task while improving the quality of our security clearances.

In addition to our own oversight, we requested that the GAO review the security clearance processes inside the Intelligence Community and report its findings. GAO brings decades of experience and deep expertise to this task. For more than 20 years its experts have examined the personnel security practices in the Department of Defense. This is the first time that Intelligence Community security practices will be subjected to such scrutiny. We look forward to Intelligence Community's cooperation with the GAO and to reviewing the results of GAO's work.

This bill is designed to remedy the shortcomings we identified last Congress. It takes a new approach to reform by requiring agencies to report to Congress annually on certain metrics related to the security clearance process. The metrics in this bill would enable Congress and HPSCI to perform effective oversight, would allow both branches to track improvements from year to year, and would allow agencies to judge the effectiveness of each other's security clearance process, improving confidence in the system. In a few areas where adequate metrics have not been developed, the Administration is required to propose metrics to Congress.

Just a few weeks ago, the Administration's Joint Security and Security Reform Team issued its proposal for security clearance process transformation. Their vision of a transformed process includes consolidated databases, interactive electronic applications, in-

vestigative techniques tailored to individual cases, automated investigation tools, automated clearance adjudication, and a more aggressive reinvestigation schedule for individual holding security clearances. Many of these reforms were required by the IRTPA and I am pleased to see their long-delayed implementation.

The security clearance process is a key to our national security establishment and we must make sure that it works as efficiently as possible. An effective security clearance system keeps out those who pose a security risk, while quickly identifying those who are trustworthy to work in the system. For too long it has been a troubled system. This legislation will allow us to confirm the necessary progress we must make in this critical area.

TARP DISAPPROVAL VOTE

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Ms. HARMAN. Madam Speaker, today I voted to disapprove the release of the second half of the so-called TARP funds. The Senate has already approved the release, so mine is essentially a protest vote. But it is a protest that should be heard.

The Bush Administration presented the \$700 billion Troubled Asset Relief Program to Congress as an asset purchase program. We were told that the Treasury Department would use the funds primarily to purchase mortgage-backed securities and other toxic assets, and then banks and credit unions would use their cleaned-up balance sheets to free up credit while the government helped renegotiate home mortgages. The focus was supposed to be about keeping people in their homes.

But looking back, it feels more like a classic bait and switch. Rather than spend the money as promised, the Bush Administration took advantage of loopholes in the law to funnel money directly to banks, who have been loathe to part with it. And the Bush Administration did this with scant oversight or accountability. We still have little idea how the first \$350 billion was spent, or whether much of it made any difference.

What is clear is that little of the funds went to the small banks and credit unions that actually keep our communities growing. I understand that only one bank holding company in my district, out of dozens of struggling community banks and credit unions, has received any help under the TARP.

The TARP has essentially become a \$350 billion bank consolidation fund. And in the meantime, the key driver behind this crisis—home foreclosures—has been all but ignored.

My constituents have noticed, and they continue to express overwhelming disapproval of the way the program has been run thus far.

Yesterday, I voted for H.R. 384, Chairman FRANK's TARP Reform and Accountability Act, which I believe would have made vital changes to the TARP—including the adoption of a home foreclosure program modeled after the one proposed by FDIC Chair Sheila Bair.

But I understand that the Senate has no plans to take up the Frank Bill, and instead will rely on assurances from NEC Chairman Larry Summers that the Obama Administration will use the second \$350 billion responsibly.