

## *Acquisition Reform*

### **Enactment of Program Management Bill Seen Likely Following Unanimous Senate Vote**

**T**he Senate's unanimous vote to approve a bill installing a more disciplined career track for managers of government acquisition programs improves prospects that the Program Management Improvement Accountability Act (PMIAA) of 2015 will be enacted next year, proponents of the measure told Bloomberg BNA Nov. 23.

The Senate passed the bill (S. 1550) under unanimous consent Nov. 19 in one of its last votes before breaking for Thanksgiving. Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), who co-sponsored the bill with Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.), amended the measure before the vote exempting the Defense Department (DOD) from requirements similar to those already in place under the Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA).

The change is "perfectly fine with us," Craig Killough of the Project Management Institute (PMI) told Bloomberg BNA. There's already "robust training and certification" for DOD program managers available from the Defense Acquisition University under DAWIA, he said.

Killough said it's doubtful the House version of the bill (H.R. 2144) will move before the end of the year. He predicted, however, that there's a good chance of the measure being marked up by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee early in 2016.

Killough's group, which has developed its own standards on program management performance, helped identify program management best practices in this area when the PMIAA was drafted (104 FCR 736, 7/14/15).

Venable LLP Partner Robert Burton agreed action in the House is unlikely this year, but told Bloomberg BNA the bill's prospects look good in 2016.

This is "significant acquisition reform legislation," he said. "Program management is a key component of acquisition."

A number of changes in the bill are similar to those recommended by the National Academy of Public Administration, Dan Chenok, executive director of the IBM Center for the Business of Government, told Bloomberg BNA.

Many of those changes, however, could be put in place without changes to the law, he said.

The legislation requires designation of a senior executive within each agency who is responsible for program management strategy, establishment of a Program Management Policy Council, strengthened engagement with the private sector, heightened scrutiny of programs identified as "high risk" by the Government Accountability Office, and adoption of governmentwide standards for program management along the lines of those set by the American National Standards Institute and the International Organization for Standardization.

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*Text of S. 1550 is available at: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1550/text>*

*Text of H.R. 2144 is available at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c114:H.R.2144>*

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