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SCHAKOWSKY INTRODUCES BILL EXPANDING CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT OVER HALLIBURTON & OTHER FIRMS WITH GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

WASHINGTON, D.C. - With billions of taxpayer dollars going to companies like Halliburton to conduct operations on behalf of the U.S. government in Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) introduced [legislation](#) today to expand oversight and to ensure Congressional access to contracts signed with private firms.

"Taxpayer dollars continue to flow to private contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan without any real scrutiny or oversight from those in Congress elected to protect the people's interests," said Schakowsky, a Chief Deputy Whip.

[Schakowsky's bill](#) would require the Department of Defense to supply Congress with copies and descriptions of new contracts and task orders that the Pentagon signs with private firms to conduct business in Iraq or Afghanistan. Specifically, the bill states that any new contract or task order that is worth more than \$1 million must be delivered by the Pentagon to Congress within 30 days. Additionally, the bill calls for the Pentagon to provide Congress within six months contracts and task orders for work already performed in Iraq and Afghanistan. The bill is cosponsored by U.S. Representative Henry Waxman (D-CA), ranking member on the Government Reform Committee.

"It is unacceptable that Congress writes the checks to keep private contractors in business but is denied access to most contracts detailing the work it is funding," said Schakowsky.

Schakowsky had requested copies of all contracts that the Pentagon signed with private firms providing supervision, security or interrogation services in Iraqi prisons. So far, Schakowsky has not received a response from the Bush Administration. Last month, Schakowsky had also called on President Bush to suspend all contracts with private firms conducting business in Iraqi prisons until a thorough investigation is completed.

"The Pentagon uses money that Congress appropriates to hire Halliburton and a host of other companies as private contractors in Iraq and in Afghanistan. We are entitled to see a detailed accounting of how that money is being spent," Schakowsky added.

Federal funds pay for firms that provide private military consultants, police trainers, interrogators, interpreters and armed security guards in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. Private contractors in Iraq have been accused of participating in the torture of prisoners in Abu Garaib prison and Halliburton, a firm with a contract worth up to \$7 billion, has already paid millions of dollars in fines for overcharging the government.

Schakowsky is a longtime critic of the increasing use of taxpayer-funded private military contractors by the U.S. government in places like Colombia and Iraq and has said that she "opposes the use of military contractors who are not subject to the same kind of scrutiny and accountability as U.S. soldiers."