

News Briefs

Security Clearance Backlog Dips as Pentagon Gears Up to Take Over Processing

(continued)

Originally, NBIB was created to handle the majority of background investigations while the Defense Department built out secure infrastructure to maintain those operations, called the National Background Investigations Services system. As the backlog grew—hitting a peak of 725,000 this April—Congress ordered NBIB to transfer Defense investigations to DSS. Rather than split the work between two departments, the administration plans to move all clearance work to the Defense Department.

“We were working through the process of splitting out of an enterprise, and there’s risk associated with that,” Reid said. “This is actually much more streamlined for us from an efficiency standpoint,” as the Defense Department makes up 70 percent of the clearance caseload.

Reid said DSS and NBIB have begun to strategize on how the merger will take place but have yet to start the process, pending an executive order from the president....

NBIB Director Charles Phalen told the committee that "... inventory is at 605,000 investigative products, a reduction of over 16 percent, and we continue to reduce the “backlog” by an average of 3,000-4,000 cases every week....”

According to Phalen, “while the number of cases we receive have continued to increase over the past few months to approximately 55,000 per week, we not only managed to keep up but have surpassed our case closures at approximately 59,000 per week, enabling the inventory to decrease.”

Charles S. Clark contributed to this report.

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