

Legislation Pending for Federal and National Y2K Test Days

Government Looks to Head Off Effect of "Millennium Bug"

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To help avoid any devastating complications from the "Y2K bug," Congressman Harold E. Ford Jr. introduced legislation on a National Y2K Test Day in early March.

The bill calls for a Federal Y2K Test Day June 1 and a National Y2K Test Day July 1. The bill would give agencies approximately six months to fix any Y2K-related problems that surface and will clearly show the nation's Y2K status since the actual "D-day" of Jan. 1, 2000, is quickly approaching.

The Government Reform Committee's grading of federal agencies Feb. 22 showed that 13 of 24 agencies are still not Y2K-compliant, resulting in an overall grade of C+. The president has set a deadline of March 31 for all federal agencies to be Y2K-compliant.

The bill has received much interest from the House and Senate. The Government Affairs Committee on the Senate Side and the Government Reform Committee on the House side are reviewing the bill. Congressman Ford's office and the committee are also working with the President's Y2K Council on the bill, and the Congressional Budget Office is currently doing a scoring for a cost estimate.

For the benefit of agencies and all the military services, this article serves as a



heads-up of the proposed June 1 Federal Y2K Test Day. Numerous questions regarding cost and disruption to the government are being posed, but the United States has already spent \$7.2 billion as of November 1998 on Y2K costs, according to the Government Accounting Office's testimony at the Y2K hearing Jan. 20.

During the U.S. Postal Service testimony at the Y2K hearing in February it became

apparent the postal service is lagging dangerously behind in its efforts to assure that its complex system of computers will function properly.

John Koskinen, chairman of the President's Y2K Council, stated at the Jan. 20 hearing that he believes the greatest Y2K risks are small businesses, small-government entities, and the international arena. He said he expects local problems, like power outages, to occur.

The bottom line is Y2K is coming with an unstoppable deadline of Jan. 1, 2000, and Congressman Ford's bill is merely a trial run. A U.S. city did a Y2K test in September 1998 and many unexpected problems occurred. The Y2K problem is real; its consequences are serious; and the deadline remains unstoppable.

Editor's Note: For more information on the pending Y2K legislation, contact:

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