

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1229

To amend chapter 23 of title 5, United States Code, to clarify the disclosures of information protected from prohibited personnel practices, require a statement in nondisclosure policies, forms, and agreements that such policies, forms, and agreements conform with certain disclosure protections, provide certain authority for the Special Counsel, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 10, 2003

Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. DAYTON) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Governmental Affairs

A BILL

To amend chapter 23 of title 5, United States Code, to clarify the disclosures of information protected from prohibited personnel practices, require a statement in nondisclosure policies, forms, and agreements that such policies, forms, and agreements conform with certain disclosure protections, provide certain authority for the Special Counsel, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. PROTECTION OF CERTAIN DISCLOSURES OF IN-**
2 **FORMATION BY FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.**

3 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the
4 “Federal Employee Protection of Disclosures Act”.

5 (b) **CLARIFICATION OF DISCLOSURES COVERED.**—
6 Section 2302(b)(8) of title 5, United States Code, is
7 amended—

8 (1) in subparagraph (A)—

9 (A) by striking “which the employee or ap-
10 plicant reasonably believes evidences” and in-
11 sserting “, without restriction to time, place,
12 form, motive, context, or prior disclosure made
13 to any person by an employee or applicant, in-
14 cluding a disclosure made in the ordinary
15 course of an employee’s duties, that the em-
16 ployee or applicant reasonably believes is evi-
17 dence of”; and

18 (B) in clause (i), by striking “a violation”
19 and inserting “any violation”;

20 (2) in subparagraph (B)—

21 (A) by striking “which the employee or ap-
22 plicant reasonably believes evidences” and in-
23 sserting “, without restriction to time, place,
24 form, motive, context, or prior disclosure made
25 to any person by an employee or applicant, in-
26 cluding a disclosure made in the ordinary

1 course of an employee's duties, to the Special
2 Counsel, or to the Inspector General of an
3 agency or another employee designated by the
4 head of the agency to receive such disclosures,
5 of information that the employee or applicant
6 reasonably believes is evidence of"; and

7 (B) in clause (i), by striking "a violation"
8 and inserting "any violation (other than a viola-
9 tion of this section)"; and

10 (3) by adding at the end the following:

11 "(C) a disclosure that—

12 "(i) is made by an employee or appli-
13 cant of information required by law or Ex-
14 ecutive order to be kept secret in the inter-
15 est of national defense or the conduct of
16 foreign affairs that the employee or appli-
17 cant reasonably believes is direct and spe-
18 cific evidence of—

19 "(I) any violation of any law,
20 rule, or regulation;

21 "(II) gross mismanagement, a
22 gross waste of funds, an abuse of au-
23 thority, or a substantial and specific
24 danger to public health or safety; or

1 “(III) a false statement to Con-
2 gress on an issue of material fact; and

3 “(ii) is made to—

4 “(I) a member of a committee of
5 Congress having a primary responsi-
6 bility for oversight of a department,
7 agency, or element of the Federal
8 Government to which the disclosed in-
9 formation relates and who is author-
10 ized to receive information of the type
11 disclosed;

12 “(II) any other Member of Con-
13 gress who is authorized to receive in-
14 formation of the type disclosed; or

15 “(III) an employee of Congress
16 who has the appropriate security
17 clearance and is authorized to receive
18 information of the type disclosed.”.

19 (c) COVERED DISCLOSURES.—Section 2302(b) of
20 title 5, United States Code, is amended—

21 (1) in the matter following paragraph (12), by
22 striking “This subsection” and inserting the fol-
23 lowing:

24 “‘This subsection’; and

25 (2) by adding at the end the following:

1 “In this subsection, the term ‘disclosure’ means a for-
2 mal or informal communication or transmission.”.

3 (d) REBUTTABLE PRESUMPTION.—Section 2302(b)
4 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding after
5 the matter following paragraph (12) (as amended by sub-
6 section (c) of this section) the following:

7 “For purposes of paragraph (8), any presumption re-
8 lating to the performance of a duty by an employee who
9 has authority to take, direct others to take, recommend,
10 or approve any personnel action may be rebutted by sub-
11 stantial evidence.”.

12 (e) NONDISCLOSURE POLICIES, FORMS, AND AGREE-
13 MENTS; SECURITY CLEARANCES; AND RETALIATORY IN-
14 VESTIGATIONS.—

15 (1) PERSONNEL ACTION.—Section
16 2302(a)(2)(A) of title 5, United States Code, is
17 amended—

18 (A) in clause (x), by striking “and” after
19 the semicolon; and

20 (B) by redesignating clause (xi) as clause
21 (xiv) and inserting after clause (x) the fol-
22 lowing:

23 “(xi) the implementation or enforce-
24 ment of any nondisclosure policy, form, or
25 agreement;

1 “(xii) a suspension, revocation, or
2 other determination relating to a security
3 clearance;

4 “(xiii) an investigation of an employee
5 or applicant for employment because of
6 any activity protected under this section;
7 and”.

8 (2) PROHIBITED PERSONNEL PRACTICE.—Sec-
9 tion 2302(b) of title 5, United States Code, is
10 amended—

11 (A) in paragraph (11), by striking “or” at
12 the end;

13 (B) in paragraph (12), by striking the pe-
14 riod and inserting a semicolon; and

15 (C) by inserting after paragraph (12) the
16 following:

17 “(13) implement or enforce any nondisclosure
18 policy, form, or agreement, if such policy, form, or
19 agreement does not contain the following statement:

20 ““These provisions are consistent with and
21 do not supersede, conflict with, or otherwise
22 alter the employee obligations, rights, or liabil-
23 ities created by Executive Order No. 12958;
24 section 7211 of title 5, United States Code
25 (governing disclosures to Congress); section

1 1034 of title 10, United States Code (governing
2 disclosure to Congress by members of the mili-
3 tary); section 2302(b)(8) of title 5, United
4 States Code (governing disclosures of illegality,
5 waste, fraud, abuse, or public health or safety
6 threats); the Intelligence Identities Protection
7 Act of 1982 (50 U.S.C. 421 et seq.) (governing
8 disclosures that could expose confidential Gov-
9 ernment agents); and the statutes which protect
10 against disclosures that could compromise na-
11 tional security, including sections 641, 793,
12 794, 798, and 952 of title 18, United States
13 Code, and section 4(b) of the Subversive Activi-
14 ties Control Act of 1950 (50 U.S.C. 783(b)).
15 The definitions, requirements, obligations,
16 rights, sanctions, and liabilities created by such
17 Executive order and such statutory provisions
18 are incorporated into this agreement and are
19 controlling.’; or

20 “(14) conduct, or cause to be conducted, an in-
21 vestigation of an employee or applicant for employ-
22 ment because of any activity protected under this
23 section.”.

24 (3) BOARD AND COURT REVIEW OF ACTIONS
25 RELATING TO SECURITY CLEARANCES.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 77 of title 5,
2 United States Code, is amended by inserting
3 after section 7702 the following:

4 **“§ 7702a. Actions relating to security clearances**

5 “(a) In any appeal relating to the suspension, revoca-
6 tion, or other determination relating to a security clear-
7 ance, the Merit Systems Protection Board or any review-
8 ing court—

9 “(1) shall determine whether section 2302 was
10 violated;

11 “(2) may not order the President to restore a
12 security clearance; and

13 “(3) subject to paragraph (2), may issue declar-
14 atory relief and any other appropriate relief.

15 “(b)(1) If, in any final judgment, the Board or court
16 declares that any suspension, revocation, or other deter-
17 mination with regards to a security clearance was made
18 in violation of section 2302, the affected agency shall con-
19 duct a review of that suspension, revocation, or other de-
20 termination, giving great weight to the Board or court
21 judgment.

22 “(2) Not later than 30 days after any Board or court
23 judgment declaring that a security clearance suspension,
24 revocation, or other determination was made in violation
25 of section 2302, the affected agency shall issue an unclas-

1 sified report to the congressional committees of jurisdic-
2 tion (with a classified annex if necessary), detailing the
3 circumstances of the agency’s security clearance suspen-
4 sion, revocation, or other determination. A report under
5 this paragraph shall include any proposed agency action
6 with regards to the security clearance.

7 “(c) An allegation that a security clearance was re-
8 voked or suspended in retaliation for a protected disclo-
9 sure shall receive expedited review by the Office of Special
10 Counsel, the Merit Systems Protection Board, and any re-
11 viewing court.”.

12 (B) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING
13 AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chap-
14 ter 77 of title 5, United States Code, is amend-
15 ed by inserting after the item relating to section
16 7702 the following:

“7702a. Actions relating to security clearances.”.

17 (f) EXCLUSION OF AGENCIES BY THE PRESIDENT.—
18 Section 2302(a)(2)(C) of title 5, United States Code, is
19 amended by striking clause (ii) and inserting the following:

20 “(ii)(I) the Federal Bureau of Inves-
21 tigation, the Central Intelligence Agency,
22 the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Na-
23 tional Imagery and Mapping Agency, the
24 National Security Agency; and

1 “(II) as determined by the President,
2 any Executive agency or unit thereof the
3 principal function of which is the conduct
4 of foreign intelligence or counterintel-
5 ligence activities, if the determination (as
6 that determination relates to a personnel
7 action) is made before that personnel ac-
8 tion; or”.

9 (g) ATTORNEY FEES.—Section 1204(m)(1) of title 5,
10 United States Code, is amended by striking “agency in-
11 volved” and inserting “agency where the prevailing party
12 is employed or has applied for employment”.

13 (h) COMPENSATORY DAMAGES.—Section 1214(g)(2)
14 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting
15 “compensatory or” after “foreseeable”.

16 (i) DISCIPLINARY ACTION.—Section 1215 of title 5,
17 United States Code, is amended in subsection (a), by
18 striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following:

19 “(3)(A) A final order of the Board may im-
20 pose—

21 “(i) disciplinary action consisting of re-
22 moval, reduction in grade, debarment from
23 Federal employment for a period not to exceed
24 5 years, suspension, or reprimand;

1 “(ii) an assessment of a civil penalty not to
2 exceed \$1,000; or

3 “(iii) any combination of disciplinary ac-
4 tions described under clause (i) and an assess-
5 ment described under clause (ii).

6 “(B) In any case in which the Board finds that
7 an employee has committed a prohibited personnel
8 practice under section 2302(b) (1), (8), or (9), the
9 Board may order disciplinary action if the Board
10 finds that the activity or status protected under sec-
11 tion 2302(b) (1), (8), or (9) was a motivating factor
12 for the employee’s decision to take, fail to take, or
13 threaten to take or fail to take a personnel action,
14 even if other factors also motivated the decision.”.

15 (j) DISCLOSURES TO CONGRESS.—Section 2302 of
16 title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the
17 end the following:

18 “(f) Each agency shall establish a process that pro-
19 vides confidential advice to employees on making a lawful
20 disclosure to Congress of information that is specifically
21 required by law or Executive order to be kept secret in
22 the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign
23 affairs.”.

24 (k) AUTHORITY OF SPECIAL COUNSEL RELATING TO
25 CIVIL ACTIONS.—

1 (1) REPRESENTATION OF SPECIAL COUNSEL.—

2 Section 1212 of title 5, United States Code, is
3 amended by adding at the end the following:

4 “(h) Except as provided in section 518 of title 28,
5 relating to litigation before the Supreme Court, attorneys
6 designated by the Special Counsel may appear for the Spe-
7 cial Counsel and represent the Special Counsel in any civil
8 action brought in connection with section 2302(b)(8) or
9 subchapter III of chapter 73, or as otherwise authorized
10 by law.”.

11 (2) JUDICIAL REVIEW OF MERIT SYSTEMS PRO-

12 TECTION BOARD DECISIONS.—Section 7703 of title
13 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the
14 end the following:

15 “(e)(1) Except as provided under paragraph (2), this
16 paragraph shall apply to any review obtained by the Spe-
17 cial Counsel. The Special Counsel may obtain review of
18 any final order or decision of the Board by filing a petition
19 for judicial review in the United States Court of Appeals
20 for the Federal Circuit if the Special Counsel determines,
21 in the discretion of the Special Counsel, that the Board
22 erred in deciding a case arising under section 2302(b)(8)
23 or subchapter III of chapter 73 and that the Board’s deci-
24 sion will have a substantial impact on the enforcement of
25 section 2302(b)(8) or subchapter III of chapter 73. If the

1 Special Counsel was not a party or did not intervene in
2 a matter before the Board, the Special Counsel may not
3 petition for review of a Board decision under this section
4 unless the Special Counsel first petitions the Board for
5 reconsideration of its decision, and such petition is denied.
6 In addition to the named respondent, the Board and all
7 other parties to the proceedings before the Board shall
8 have the right to appear in the proceedings before the
9 Court of Appeals. The granting of the petition for judicial
10 review shall be at the discretion of the Court of Appeals.

11 “(2) During the 5-year period beginning on the effec-
12 tive date of the Federal Employee Protection of Dislo-
13 sures Act, this paragraph shall apply to any review ob-
14 tained by the Special Counsel. The Special Counsel may
15 obtain review of any final order or decision of the Board
16 by filing a petition for judicial review in the United States
17 Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit or any court of
18 appeals of competent jurisdiction as provided under sub-
19 section (b)(2) if the Special Counsel determines, in the dis-
20 cretion of the Special Counsel, that the Board erred in
21 deciding a case arising under section 2302(b)(8) or sub-
22 chapter III of chapter 73 and that the Board’s decision
23 will have a substantial impact on the enforcement of sec-
24 tion 2302(b)(8) or subchapter III of chapter 73. If the
25 Special Counsel was not a party or did not intervene in

1 a matter before the Board, the Special Counsel may not
2 petition for review of a Board decision under this section
3 unless the Special Counsel first petitions the Board for
4 reconsideration of its decision, and such petition is denied.
5 In addition to the named respondent, the Board and all
6 other parties to the proceedings before the Board shall
7 have the right to appear in the proceedings before the
8 court of appeals. The granting of the petition for judicial
9 review shall be at the discretion of the court of appeals.”.

10 (l) JUDICIAL REVIEW.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Section 7703(b) of title 5,
12 United States Code, is amended by striking para-
13 graph (1) and inserting the following:

14 “(b)(1)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B)
15 and paragraph (2) of this subsection, a petition to review
16 a final order or final decision of the Board shall be filed
17 in the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Cir-
18 cuit. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any peti-
19 tion for review must be filed within 60 days after the date
20 the petitioner received notice of the final order or decision
21 of the Board.

22 “(B) During the 5-year period beginning on the effec-
23 tive date of the Federal Employee Protection of Disclo-
24 sures Act, a petition to review a final order or final deci-
25 sion of the Board shall be filed in the United States Court

1 of Appeals for the Federal Circuit or any court of appeals
2 of competent jurisdiction as provided under subsection
3 (b)(2). Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any
4 petition for review must be filed within 60 days after the
5 date the petitioner received notice of the final order or
6 decision of the Board.”.

7 (2) REVIEW OBTAINED BY OFFICE OF PER-
8 SONNEL MANAGEMENT.—Section 7703 of title 5,
9 United States Code, is amended by striking sub-
10 section (d) and inserting the following:

11 “(d)(1) Except as provided under paragraph (2), this
12 paragraph shall apply to any review obtained by the Direc-
13 tor of the Office of Personnel Management. The Director
14 of the Office of Personnel Management may obtain review
15 of any final order or decision of the Board by filing, within
16 60 days after the date the Director received notice of the
17 final order or decision of the Board, a petition for judicial
18 review in the United States Court of Appeals for the Fed-
19 eral Circuit if the Director determines, in his discretion,
20 that the Board erred in interpreting a civil service law,
21 rule, or regulation affecting personnel management and
22 that the Board’s decision will have a substantial impact
23 on a civil service law, rule, regulation, or policy directive.
24 If the Director did not intervene in a matter before the
25 Board, the Director may not petition for review of a Board

1 decision under this section unless the Director first peti-
2 tions the Board for a reconsideration of its decision, and
3 such petition is denied. In addition to the named respond-
4 ent, the Board and all other parties to the proceedings
5 before the Board shall have the right to appear in the pro-
6 ceeding before the Court of Appeals. The granting of the
7 petition for judicial review shall be at the discretion of the
8 Court of Appeals.

9 “(2) During the 5-year period beginning on the effec-
10 tive date of the Federal Employee Protection of Disclo-
11 sures Act, this paragraph shall apply to any review ob-
12 tained by the Director of the Office of Personnel Manage-
13 ment. The Director of the Office of Personnel Manage-
14 ment may obtain review of any final order or decision of
15 the Board by filing, within 60 days after the date the Di-
16 rector received notice of the final order or decision of the
17 Board, a petition for judicial review in the United States
18 Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit or any court of
19 appeals of competent jurisdiction as provided under sub-
20 section (b)(2) if the Director determines, in his discretion,
21 that the Board erred in interpreting a civil service law,
22 rule, or regulation affecting personnel management and
23 that the Board’s decision will have a substantial impact
24 on a civil service law, rule, regulation, or policy directive.
25 If the Director did not intervene in a matter before the

1 Board, the Director may not petition for review of a Board
2 decision under this section unless the Director first peti-
3 tions the Board for a reconsideration of its decision, and
4 such petition is denied. In addition to the named respon-
5 dent, the Board and all other parties to the proceedings
6 before the Board shall have the right to appear in the pro-
7 ceeding before the court of appeals. The granting of the
8 petition for judicial review shall be at the discretion of the
9 Court of Appeals.”.

10 (m) NONDISCLOSURE POLICIES, FORMS, AND
11 AGREEMENTS.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—

13 (A) REQUIREMENT.—Each agreement in
14 Standard Forms 312 and 4414 of the Govern-
15 ment and any other nondisclosure policy, form,
16 or agreement of the Government shall contain
17 the following statement: “These restrictions are
18 consistent with and do not supersede, conflict
19 with, or otherwise alter the employee obliga-
20 tions, rights, or liabilities created by Executive
21 Order No. 12958; section 7211 of title 5,
22 United States Code (governing disclosures to
23 Congress); section 1034 of title 10, United
24 States Code (governing disclosure to Congress
25 by members of the military); section 2302(b)(8)

1 of title 5, United States Code (governing disclo-
2 sures of illegality, waste, fraud, abuse or public
3 health or safety threats); the Intelligence Iden-
4 tities Protection Act of 1982 (50 U.S.C. 421 et
5 seq.) (governing disclosures that could expose
6 confidential Government agents); and the stat-
7 utes which protect against disclosure that may
8 compromise the national security, including sec-
9 tions 641, 793, 794, 798, and 952 of title 18,
10 United States Code, and section 4(b) of the
11 Subversive Activities Act of 1950 (50 U.S.C.
12 783(b)). The definitions, requirements, obliga-
13 tions, rights, sanctions, and liabilities created
14 by such Executive order and such statutory
15 provisions are incorporated into this agreement
16 and are controlling.”

17 (B) ENFORCEABILITY.—Any nondisclosure
18 policy, form, or agreement described under sub-
19 paragraph (A) that does not contain the state-
20 ment required under subparagraph (A) may not
21 be implemented or enforced to the extent such
22 policy, form, or agreement is inconsistent with
23 that statement.

24 (2) PERSONS OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT EM-
25 PLOYEES.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), a non-

1 disclosure policy, form, or agreement that is to be
2 executed by a person connected with the conduct of
3 an intelligence or intelligence-related activity, other
4 than an employee or officer of the Federal Govern-
5 ment or a State or local government, may contain
6 provisions appropriate to the particular activity for
7 which such document is to be used. Such form or
8 agreement shall, at a minimum, require that the per-
9 son will not disclose any classified information re-
10 ceived in the course of such activity unless specifi-
11 cally authorized to do so by the United States Gov-
12 ernment. Such nondisclosure forms shall also make
13 it clear that such forms do not bar disclosures to
14 Congress or to an authorized official of an executive
15 agency or the Department of Justice that are essen-
16 tial to reporting a substantial violation of law.

17 (n) CLARIFICATION OF WHISTLEBLOWER RIGHTS
18 FOR CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE INFORMATION.—Section
19 214(c) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law
20 107–296) is amended by adding at the end the following:
21 “For purposes of this section a permissible use of inde-
22 pendently obtained information includes the disclosure of
23 such information under section 2302(b)(8) of title 5,
24 United States Code.”.

1 (o) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This Act shall take effect 30
2 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

○