

The American Legion

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OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

July 25, 2006

Honorable J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Hastert:

The American Legion adamantly opposes any proposed legislation to create one or more "sunset commissions." As you and your colleagues consider H.R. 3282, the Abolishment of Obsolete Agencies and Federal Sunset Act of 2005, and H.R. 5766, the Government Efficiency Act of 2006, later this week, The American Legion urges rejection of both.

The American Legion's legislative portfolio covers a very wide spectrum of Federal agencies and programs from the Department of Defense to the Department of Labor to the Department of State to the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The innocent intent of cleaning up some frivolous government agencies/departments would have possible far-reaching unintended consequences.

Currently, both Congress and the Administration are responsible for oversight functions – not "sunset commissions" prescribed by these two bills. The American Legion has grave concerns over the selection process of Commissioners, the lack of transparency and public involvement, and the lack of accountability. Quite frankly, the idea of growing government (creation of sunset commissions) to reduce government seems like poor public policy. How is a determination made as to whether a "sunset commission" is accountable, efficient and effective? Is that decision made by yet another "sunset commission?"

As the world's largest community-based wartime veterans' service organization, we are well aware that a few states have experimented with "sunset commissions," and most have ended with far less than positive results. The bottom line is they were largely unaccountable, inefficient, and ineffective.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, The American Legion believes "sunset commissions" are not needed.

Sincerely,

THOMAS L. BOCK
National Commander

C: All Members
U.S. House of Representatives