

## MURRAY BLASTS REPORT ON FBI - SENATOR TO KEEP PUSHING FOR CHANGE

*Seattle Post-Intelligencer (WA) - July 26, 2008*

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- Edition: Final
- Section: News
- Page: B1

U.S. Sen. Patty Murray's efforts to fix a crippled FBI were dealt a setback Friday when the Bush administration withheld critical information on bureau staffing that Congress had ordered it to provide.

A report to Congress on how the FBI uses its agents is so lacking in substance that it fails to meet a legislative mandate passed in December, Murray complained.

The Washington Democrat inserted the requirement for that report into the 2008 budget as a road map for Congress to restore FBI crime squads the Bush administration cannibalized after 9/11 in order to beef up counterterrorism operations.

"If I had to grade DOJ on completing the assignment, this report would get an 'F.' After months of waiting for an accurate representation of the FBI's needs, all we got was more stonewalling," Murray said.

The Bush administration - in reinventing the FBI after the 2001 terrorist attacks - shifted about 2,400 agents from traditional crime-fighting squads to counterterrorism units, according to a Seattle P-I analysis of FBI data. At least 1,700 of those agents haven't been replaced, and the latest Bush budget continues that trend.

The result has been a dramatic drop in the number of crimes investigated by the FBI nationwide.

The four-page document delivered Friday speaks in broad generalities, failing to address Murray's concerns about critical understaffing in the fight against white-collar crime, violent crime and civil rights violations. It also doesn't address a disproportionate allocation of agents among the states. Washington, for example, has 30 percent fewer agents than the adjusted national average.

The report, titled "FBI Workforce Allocation Report to Congress," doesn't contain a single number showing where or how agents are used.

Rather, it contains language such as this: "Because resources are appropriated and allocated programmatically, program managers assess field needs and make decisions within their area of responsibility. The cumulative allocation decisions result in the total allocation of each field office."

Not only does the report lack any details on how the FBI uses its agents, it's also about five months late. The bureau was supposed to deliver it within 60 days of the budget's December enactment.

A Justice Department official said the White House Office of Management and Budget held it up during a Justice Department review.

Murray plans to "keep the pressure on," said her spokeswoman Alex Glass. The fourth-ranking Senate Democrat will ask for a full, classified report so at least Congress can have the information, even if it is not available to the public, Glass said.

"The DOJ needs to come forward with an honest assessment of their needs," said Murray. "Congress wants to be a partner in keeping our communities safe, but we can't provide the right resources without honest information. I say to the FBI, help us help you."

OMB made critical decisions not to replace agents transferred to counterterrorism despite requests to do so by FBI Director Robert Mueller.

OMB Deputy Director Steve McMillin has said that even partially restoring the FBI's crime-fighting capabilities shouldn't be a priority.

McMillin's boss, OMB Director Rob Portman, is frequently mentioned as a potential running mate for presumptive Republican presidential nominee John McCain.

McCain has no official position on restoring the FBI, and his campaign has repeatedly refused to answer questions on what - if anything - McCain would do to restore the FBI's crime-fighting capacity.

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama has joined Murray in backing a proposal by Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del., to hire 1,000 new agents.

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• *Index terms: CONGRESS TERRORISM CRIME POLICE*

• *Record: 0807260157*

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