

Matsui, Shays and Maloney Work to Improve Cruise Line Safety Bipartisan Bill Strengthens Crime Repo

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Washington, D.C. - The Committee on Homeland Security today approved by voice vote inclusion of language in H.R. 2830, the Coast Guard Authorization Act, requiring cruise lines to notify the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary of security-related incidents involving U.S. persons when it advises its port of call of its arrival.

Incidents required to be reported under the legislation include any act that results in death, serious bodily injury, sexual assault, a missing person, or that poses a significant threat to the cruise ship, any cruise ship passenger, any port facility, or any person in or near the port.

"This notification requirement is a good first step towards improving the transparency of cruise crime statistics and improving the safety of cruise ship passengers," Shays, a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee, stated. "It's important we continue the efforts which began in the last Congress, when I chaired two hearings on the National Security Subcommittee on cruise ship safety, where we learned just how inaccurate the crime statistics the cruise industry provides are."

"It is imperative that Congress spur the cruise industry to accurately report crimes at sea and keep their passengers safe," said Matsui. "The Americans who have been victims of these crimes have told their stories courageously in an effort to help prevent such tragedies from occurring to others. This is a solid step towards improving safety on cruise ships."

Representatives Shays, Matsui and Maloney recently introduced H.Res. 652, to call attention to the growing level of crime on cruise ships and the lack of federal regulation overseeing the cruise industry. The resolution states that Americans should have access to justice and information regarding security risks, and that Congress should provide oversight to ensure the safety of American passengers. Shays also testified before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation on March 27, 2007 on the need to

increased reporting and tracking of cruise ship crime.

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