

# House passes bill to expand telework

By [STEPHEN LOSEY](#) | Last Updated: July 14, 2010

The House on Wednesday approved a bill that will require agencies to allow eligible federal employees to telework at least 20 percent of their hours.

HR 1722, the Telework Improvements Act, will also require agencies to have a written telework policy and appoint telework managing officers. Those officials will be in charge of identifying and removing roadblocks preventing telework, and will work with senior leaders to incorporate teleworking into agencies' continuity of operations plans.

The Senate passed a similar bill, S 707, in May.

The Office of Personnel Management has touted teleworking as a way to keep the government running during weather emergencies such as the snowstorms that hit Washington in February. OPM estimates teleworking saved as much as \$30 million per day during the blizzard, though it has not been able to precisely measure telework savings.

Rep. John Sarbanes, D-Md., one of the bill's sponsors, said expanding telework will have many benefits.

"A robust telework program will not only improve government operations during a disaster, [and] it could be used as a tool to reduce traffic congestion in the D.C. area," Sarbanes said in a statement. "If fully integrated, it can save taxpayers money by increasing efficiency, reducing federal office space and improving employee retention."

The National Treasury Employees Union applauded the vote.

"Everyone wins with a well-designed, effective telework program," NTEU President Colleen Kelley said. "I am confident that as more and more front-line and middle managers become willing to accept telework as a valuable tool, the success of these programs will lead to still more telework opportunities throughout the government."