

For Immediate Release

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SENATORS INTRODUCE MEASURE TO IMPLEMENT 9-11 COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

WASHINGTON—In an effort to fortify the nation’s homeland and national security, a bipartisan group of Senators Tuesday introduced legislation to implement recommendations made by the 9/11 Commission in July. The 280-page omnibus legislation covers subjects ranging from intelligence reform, border and transportation security, information sharing and outreach to the Muslim world.

Also attending the announcement to show their support for the legislation were 9-11 Commission Chairman Thomas Kean and Vice Chairman Lee Hamilton.

Senators introducing the legislation include Commerce Committee Chairman John McCain, R-Ariz., and Governmental Affairs Committee Ranking Member Joe Lieberman, D-Conn.— co-authors of the legislation introduced in December 2001 that created the 9-11 Commission – Senator Arlen Specter, R-Pa., a senior member of the Judiciary and Appropriations Committees and former Chairman of the Select Committee on Intelligence; and Senator Evan Bayh, D-Ind., a member of the Select Committee on Intelligence and the Armed Services Committee.

Representatives Chris Shays, R-Conn., and Carolyn Maloney, D-NY, who will be introducing companion legislation in the House of Representatives, attended as well. And Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., and Senators Hilary Clinton, D-N.Y., and Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., signed on as original co-sponsors.

McCain, Lieberman, Bayh, and Specter had announced on July 22 – the day the Commission published its final report – that they would draft legislation faithful to the Commission’s recommendations and in the same bipartisan spirit in which it produced its seminal work.

Among other things, the bill would:

- Create a strong National Intelligence Director with real budget authority and a National Counterterrorism Center to pull together intelligence activities;
- Establish a far-reaching information sharing network to promote sharing of intelligence and homeland security information throughout government, including with state and local agencies;
- Develop an integrated screening system using a network of screening points at U.S. borders, in the transportation system and other critical infrastructure that need to be protected against terrorist attack.
- Increase aid to Afghanistan, renewed support for Pakistan and open new avenues of dialogue and diplomacy with the Muslim world;

- Ensure that civil liberties and privacy rights are protected as reforms are implemented.

McCain said: "To protect the security of our nation, Congress must act with dispatch to carefully consider the recommendations of the 9-11 Commission and to enact needed changes to further secure our homeland. We continue to confront grave threats, and there is no greater priority than ensuring the safety of our country."

Lieberman said: "The sweep of reform contained in this bill is historic, as it must be, because the challenges that confront us have little precedent in history. Every aspect of our open society is constantly being probed for weakness that can be used against us to attack right here in America. The Commission has shown the depth of the challenge before us and the urgency in confronting it.

"Also, the Senate leadership assigned the Governmental Affairs Committee the job of looking at the commission's recommendations on executive branch reorganization. Chairman Susan Collins and I have been holding hearings since July and are working on a Committee bill that I am confident we will markup and report to the Senate floor before Sept. 27.

"The work on both pieces of legislation – the bill we announce today and the Governmental Affairs Committee bill – has proceeded distinctly but collaboratively. Each has informed and strengthened the other. I look forward to the Committee's markup during the week of September 20th and Senators McCain, Specter, Bayh and I hope that the work we and our staffs have done will contribute to an expeditious process."

Specter said: "We are certainly on alert and the time has come for some action to put all of the intelligence agencies under one umbrella. With the filing of this very distinguished Commission's report, the time is really ripe for action. There is no doubt in my mind that had all of the information been available in a coordinated matter, that 9/11 could have been prevented."

Bayh said: "As we pledged in July, we are here today on the first day the Senate is back in session, to introduce legislation that will act on the proposals made by the 9-11 Commission. This legislation represents the efforts of members from both parties working together for the common good of reforming our intelligence community, an effort in which I hope our colleagues will join us, so we can enact the necessary changes to win the war on terrorism."

In addition, a separate Senate task force, which includes Senators McCain and Lieberman, will be looking specifically at reorganizing the way Congress oversees homeland security and intelligence matters.

For a copy of the bill, click here:

<http://govt-aff.senate.gov/files/090704bill911commission.pdf>

For a summary of the bill, click here:

<http://govt-aff.senate.gov/files/090704sixpagesummary911bill.pdf>