

Status of Legislation to Implement the Recommendations
Of the Independent 9/11 Commission

The past six weeks have been a momentous time in the struggle for securing the borders of our country and stopping terrorists from entering the United States.

The leadership of the US House introduced HR 10, a bill that will effectively prevent terrorism inside US borders. In order to support HR10, 9/11 FSA members went to Washington on a half dozen different occasions in October.

During House consideration of HR10 letters from the 9/11FSA Board of Directors were sent to several House Committee Chairmen, and these letters were read into the record. Our letters were important factors in stopping proposed amendments that would have gutted the bill.

On October 4, HR10 reached the House floor for a final vote. Representatives who favor open borders and illegal immigration, such as Reps. Menendez (NJ) and Guttierrez (Ill) attempted to kill the bill. Opposing their efforts on the floor of the House Rep Sensenbrenner read a letter from us and this helped HR 10 pass with its strong border security provisions intact in a bi-partisan vote of 282 to 134.

Unfortunately, the Senate passed what it calls a 9/11 Implementation bill (known as the Collins-Lieberman-McCain Bill) which completely ignores the issues of border security and the massive invasion of our country by illegal aliens and the unknown terrorists among them. (Thanks to Sen. McCain the Senate bill specifically permits the states to continue to issue licenses to people, including terrorists, whose identity is unknown.)

The two bills then were sent to a House-Senate Conference for final wording. At that point it seemed that the Senate bill was headed for certain passage without the border security provisions of HR 10, but this disaster was avoided because of the actions of the members of 9/11 FSA.

On October 5, Joan Molinaro, Colette Lafuente and Peter Gadiel of 9/11 FSA spoke in support of HR10 at a Capitol Hill press conference with House Speaker Hastert, Majority Leader DeLay, Majority Whip Blunt, and Reps Pryce of Ohio, Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin, and Hostettler of Indiana. A dozen other 9/11FSA members attended that event to lend their support.

On October 15, members of 9/11FSA again spoke in support of HR10 at a press conference with Rep David Dreier.

On October 27, Joan Molinaro, Colette Lafuente and Debra Burlingame spoke at a third Capitol press conference. (You can see part of this press conference at the following link: <http://www.americanpatrol.com/WEB2004/041028.html>)

Several members of the self-appointed "Family Steering Committee showed up at this press conference. When asked about their membership, Carol Ashley admitted that they have no members other than the dozen who claim membership on the "Steering Committee." This admission stunned the reporters, who previously had thought the "Steering Committee actually represented many 9/11 families.

In addition to speaking at these press conferences, our members also lobbied many members of the House and Senate throughout October in support of HR10. Also, Joan Molinaro appeared on the Lou Dobbs program on CNN on October 15, and spoke with great effect about the need to enact all of the Commission's reforms. Our members attended several of the Conferences that were open to the public to remind the conferees of their obligations to the victims of 9/11.

On October 20, 9/11FSA sent a letter signed by one hundred fifty relatives of 9/11 victims strongly opposing passage of any 9/11 Implementation Act without border and I.D. security measures. (That letter is attached to this email) We have been informed by several members of Congress that the involvement of 9/11 FSA can be credited with stopping the fraud known as Collins-Lieberman-McCain. We are very proud of this accomplishment.

In the last two weeks, six US Senators have announced their support for the border and ID provisions of HR10: John Cornyn (Texas), Charles Grassley (Iowa), Orin Hatch (Utah), Imhofe (Okla), John Kyl (Ariz), Jeff Sessions (Ala).

Here is additional background information on the dispute between the House and Senate over their two versions of the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Implementation Act.

The Independent 9/11 Commission recommended in its report that the intelligence services of the US be reorganized. It also stated that securing our borders, denying US-issued drivers' licenses to potential terrorists, and enforcement of immigration laws by state and local police are essential in order to prevent future terrorist attacks. (The following links will bring you to portions of the Report that briefly summarize the Commissions findings on secure borders, drivers' licenses and local enforcement: www.9-11commission.gov/staff_statements/911_terrtrav_pref.pdf and http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report_Ch12.pdf)

Immediately after the Report was issued, and apparently without knowing what was in it, members of the US House and Senate loudly demanded that all of the Commission recommendations be adopted by Congress. When they learned that the Report included recommendations about securing our borders, immigration law enforcement and drivers' licenses many of these same politicians suddenly decided that these provisions were "controversial" or "extraneous." So instead these open borders politicians, led by Senators Susan Collins, Joseph Lieberman and John McCain and Representatives Susan Maloney and Christopher Shays introduced legislation that implemented ONLY the intelligence reform provisions. This bill did not propose any increased border security measures, and specifically permits states to go on giving licenses to illegal aliens and the terrorists among them.

Sadly, a dozen family members calling themselves the "Family Steering Committee" surrendered to the threats of the Senators that if the Commission's recommendations on border security were included in the final bill, that the Senate would not allow any bill to pass. Many newspapers, supporting cheap labor and open borders presented the "Steering Committee" as if they represented all the families. In reality, the "Steering Committee" consists of ten self-appointed individuals who rejected any input from the rest of the families in their dealings with Collins, Lieberman, Shays, etc.

The argument of the "Steering Committee" is that the only bill that the Senators will pass is one that deals strictly with intelligence reform. The "Steering Committee" has in effect been blackmailed by the open borders politicians. Furthermore, the "Steering Committee" has sacrificed its position as a non-partisan group because half the members joined the Kerry campaign. In contrast, 9/11 FSA remained completely neutral on the presidential race. Our individual members, as is appropriate for a non-partisan organization, are split in their preferences for President, and some individual members did publicly support Sen. Kerry or Pres. Bush.