

Reprinted from NewsMax.com

Thursday, Dec. 2, 2004 12:31 a.m. EST

9/11 Families Back Sensenbrenner in Intel Fight

Leaders of a group representing more than 300 family members of 9/11 victims urged Congress on Tuesday to scrap the intelligence reform bill because it doesn't include key provisions to secure the nation's borders against terrorist infiltration - the same objection raised by one of the bill's leading opponents, Wisconsin Rep. James Sensenbrenner.

"No bill should pass the Senate, the House, anywhere, unless it contains immigration reform," said Joan Molinaro, the mother of a New York City firefighter killed on September 11 and a member of the group "9/11 Families for a Secure America."

Holding up a picture of her son and then a picture of her two daughters, Molinaro testified: "You allowed the murder of my son. I will not allow you to kill my daughters."

In quotes picked up by the Washington Times, she added, "You secure our borders, you keep my girls alive."

Debra Burlingame, a spokeswoman for the group, whose brother Charles piloted the jet that was taken over by hijackers and struck the Pentagon, said Wednesday that border enforcement is key to any intelligence reform bill.

Explaining her opposition to the bill, Burlingame told WWRL Radio's Steve Malzberg and Karen Hunter that the immigration provisions were opposed by special interests in Washington.

"The agricultural and construction businesses who employ [illegal aliens] have big lobbies in

Washington," Burlingame said. "You have the banks, who get billions of dollars from illegal aliens because they use banks to wire money back home."

"The biggest contributor of all are the immigration lawyers, whose entire income stream is derived from getting illegal aliens here and keeping them here," she said.

Burlingame said that "tens of thousands of immigrants who come are undocumented people who are claiming asylum, but there is no space to detain them," forcing the release of 94 percent of that group into the general population.

"One of the provisions that Rep. Sensenbrenner was trying to get was additional bed space so that we can hold them pending a hearing," she explained.

Molinaro, Burlingame and other 9/11 families who back Sensenbrenner's efforts have been largely ignored by the media, which has focused instead on other victim families aligned with 9/11 Commission Chairman Tom Kean, who strongly backs the bill.

But Burlingame blasted Chairman Kean on Tuesday, saying he was wrong when he insisted that tighter border controls wouldn't have stopped the 9/11 hijackers. "He should read his own report," she said.

9/11 Families for a Secure America plans to launch a radio ad campaign praising key House Republicans for opposing the flawed intelligence bill.

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