

Eshoo Statement on Implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendations

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[Video]

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Washington, D.C. -- Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-California, made the following statement on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives regarding H.R. 1, the 9/11 Commission International Implementation Act of 2007.

"Mr. Speaker, I rise as a proud cosponsor of this legislation, which is really going to complete the outstanding work of the 9/11 Commission.

"The issue that I want to focus my remarks on today is one that my colleagues and myself have worked very hard on, on a bipartisan basis, at the Energy and Commerce Committee for many years, and that is how to guarantee real communications interoperability between first responders. It is a very very important issue for all of our first responders in our communities.

"The fact is is that interoperability can be solved today. Advanced technology developed across the United States and certainly in my district in the Silicon Valley can successfully enable first responders and others to communicate using disparate communication devices and networks. The problem up to this point has been a lack of resources and guidance from the federal government as to where and how local first responders should be investing their scarce dollars to achieve a solution.

"This bill before us addresses this problem by establishing a stand-alone grant program within the Department of Homeland Security devoted to establishing an interoperability framework that local authorities can work from.

"What is of utmost importance in creating this new grant program is the need to ensure technology neutrality so that the best available solution, whether it be radio, software, or IP network-based, can be implemented as soon as possible.

"With this in mind, I would at this time yield to my colleague, the Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, to ask if he agrees that the goal and the intent of this legislation is to guarantee that our efforts to fund interoperability solutions are technology neutral. Specifically, the term 'equipment,' as used in the legislation should not be interpreted to exclude important technology such as software, middleware, or network-based IP solutions."

Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson, D-MS: "Thank you very much. I can assure the gentlelady that the goal of this legislation is to be technologically neutral."

Representative Eshoo: "I thank the Chairman, and I encourage my colleagues to help promote full communications interoperability by supporting the bill before us."

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