

## CASTLE CHIDES CONGRESS FOR FAILURE TO ACT ON CRITICAL 9/11 COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION -- July 16, 2008

Speaks in opposition to House's failure to take-up Castle-Shays amendment

Washington, DC - Today, Congressman Mike Castle delivered the following statement on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives:

"Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule for consideration of the Fiscal Year 2009 Intelligence Authorization Act.

As a former Member of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, I strongly believe that we must enact all of the 9/11 Commission's intelligence recommendations, even those that apply to our own congressional committees.

In its final report, the 9/11 Commission concluded that: "Of all our recommendations, strengthening congressional oversight may be among the most difficult and important. So long as oversight is governed by the current congressional rules and resolutions, we believe the American people will not get the security they want and need."

The bipartisan 9/11 Commission report and the subsequent 9/11 Public Disclosure Project recommended three alternatives for reforming congressional oversight of intelligence. These options include, (1) establishing a joint committee on intelligence modeled after the old Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, (2) establishing House and Senate committees on intelligence with authorizing and appropriating authority, OR (3) establishing a new appropriations subcommittee on intelligence.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of 2001, Congress enacted a large majority of the Commission's recommendations. However, as it turns out, it has been those recommendations that apply directly to the tangled rules and procedures here in the United States Congress, which have been left unfinished.

Last year, Congress applied a "Band-Aide" to this problem by creating a powerless Intelligence Oversight Panel that has very little control over actual funding decisions. Despite what I am certain are sincere efforts on the part of Members of this panel - this is clearly not what the 9/11 Commission recommended. In fact, its report plainly states that "Tinkering with the existing committee structure is not sufficient."

As a result, experts on the 9/11 Commission - including a leading Democrat from the Commission who I happened to speak with this morning - are concerned that intelligence agencies can dodge effective oversight by going around the authorizing committees that scrutinize them most closely.

For example, last year the Ranking Member of the Senate Intelligence Committee described what he called a "consistent pattern" in which the authorizing committee held in-depth hearings and then made specific funding recommendations for several secret programs; only to have appropriators go in a dramatically different direction.

Yesterday, Congressman Shays and I appeared before the Rules Committee and offered a simple amendment to the bill before us, calling for a sense of congress that this House should act at the start of next year to implement these crucial 9/11 recommendations.

Unfortunately, despite vocal support from both Democrats and Republicans on the Rules Committee last night, this amendment was denied under today's rule.

I have no doubt that implementing this proposal will be a challenge - yet we cannot continue to just sweep this vital 9/11 Commission recommendation under the rug while at the same time calling for other government agencies to make reforms.

As former 9/11 Commission Member Tim Roemer noted recently, "Out of all of the many recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, the congressional reform one might be the hardest, but it may be the single most important."

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