

**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM**  
**TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN**



**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**For Immediate Release**  
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**Government Reform Committee to Review**  
**9/11 Commission Recommendations**

*First House Hearing on Report to Highlight Nexus Between Impediments to  
Information Sharing and Need for Government Reorganization*

**What: Government Reform Committee oversight hearing:  
“Moving from ‘Need to Know’ to ‘Need to Share:’ A Review of the 9-11  
Commission’s Recommendations”**

*The Committee will assess which recommendations are most urgent, which may require sustained effort  
over time to achieve, which can be accomplished administratively, and which require legislative action.*

**When: TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 10:00 A.M.**

**Where: ROOM 2154, RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING**

**Background:**

In its final report, The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States illustrated that vulnerabilities in the nation’s security, aviation, immigration and information-sharing systems were exploited to turn the nefarious plans of the terrorists into a tragic reality.

The Commission report has a broad array of recommendations to organize the government and promote the type of cross-agency cooperation needed to deal with the asymmetric threat of terrorism. As a nation we must be able to identify and defeat terrorist threats, to protect our critical infrastructure, mitigate cyber and physical attacks, and manage the response to attacks. This responsibility does not rest solely with the federal government. State and local governments and the private sector also play integral roles. Our success depends on collecting, analyzing, and appropriately sharing information found in databases, transactions, and other sources. As the Commission

notes, “the U.S. Government has access to a vast amount of information. But it has a weak system for processing and using what it has. The system of ‘need to know’ should be replaced by a system of ‘need to share.’”

The 9-11 Commission also recommends “unifying the many participants in the counterterrorism effort and their knowledge in a network-based information sharing system that transcends traditional governmental boundaries.” The Commission calls on the President “to lead a government-wide effort to bring the major national security institutions into the information revolution, turning a mainframe system into a decentralized network.”

**During their hearings, the Commission discovered what the Committee on Government Reform has long known: Many of the information sharing problems are directly related to the way agencies are organized and managed. The Commission recognized that the United States government must be better organized than it is today, with national security institutions designed half a century ago to win the Cold War. Part and parcel of moving from a system of “need to know” to “need to share” is Executive Reorganization Authority.**

The Committee on Reform Committee has held several hearings on the need to reauthorize the Executive Reorganization Authority, which expired in 1984. The authority existed off an on for more than 50 years, giving Presidents the ability to submit Executive Branch reorganization proposals to the Congress for a guaranteed up-or-down vote. (Such authority was used to transform the Budget Bureau into the Office of Management and Budget in 1970 and to consolidate various agencies into the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 1979.) Under this authority, Executive Branch reorganizations could come before Congress without getting buried in the congressional committee jurisdictional turf battles that have spelled the demise of many governmental reorganization proposals in recent history.

Reauthorization of the Executive Reorganization Authority was part of the President’s Management Agenda in the fiscal 2002 budget, and it was one of the top recommendations made by the 2003 report on revitalizing the federal government by the Volcker Commission. **The recommendations made by the 9-11 Commission make reauthorization of this authority all the more urgent. The obsolete, redundant, and duplicative nature of the federal bureaucracy is the single greatest impediment to improving information sharing. Simply stated, no discussion of impediments to effective information sharing can be complete without discussing the need to reorganize the Executive Branch.**

**WITNESSES will likely include:**

**Commissioners from the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon The United States (the 9/11 Commission); family members of 9-11 victims; David M. Walker, Comptroller General, Government Accountability Office; officials from federal law enforcement and intelligence gathering agencies; experts on government organization; and critical infrastructure industry officials.**

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