

October 25, 2004

Thomas H. Kean and Lee H. Hamilton, former Chair and Vice Chair of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (also known as the 9-11 Commission), today gave the following statement:

- We are at a crossroads. It has now been more than three months since we presented our recommendations to the American people. At the time, we noted that if the government does not act on our recommendations – and if there were another attack – the American people would quickly fix responsibility for failure. There is very little time left in this Congress to act.
- The question before us is straightforward: Will the Congress complete action on meaningful reform, or will it not?
- We want the House-Senate conference committee, and the President, to come together and complete action on legislation to make our country safer and more secure.
- The House sent an offer to the Senate on Friday, and the Senate sent one back very late Saturday. This is a dynamic process and it is still moving forward. We know these offers were made in good faith. We know that all parties want a bill sent to the President that he can sign, as soon as possible. We also know that there has not yet been a breakthrough.
- At this late hour, we believe that the four lead conferees and their key staff need to huddle together. They need to produce a common text that they can bring back to their respective chambers for voting. We believe this is the best way to move the process forward.
- Until the parties produce a common text, even one with bracketed text, the process will not get the traction it needs to move forward.
- We urge the President, and Congressional leaders, to redouble their efforts as well so that a good bill can reach the President's desk promptly.
- Make no mistake: This is a real test of leadership. All of the work of the Commission, and the hard work of both Houses, will die with the end of the Congress – unless we act now.
- The intent and the capability of our enemy is clear. Al-Qaeda wants to hit us again. We cannot wait.

- Our exhaustive review of the facts and circumstances of the 9/11 attacks makes clear that dramatic reform of our institutions is necessary.
- There are precious few moments when it is possible to make real and dramatic change in government. Those opportunities come once a generation. Now is that moment.
- We are deeply concerned that this moment not slip past us. We urge the Congress to come together, Republicans and Democrats, House and Senate, to set aside differences and come together as citizens and statesmen with our common goal: to enhance the security of the American people.