

**Introduction of the Homeland Security Interagency
and Interjurisdictional Information Sharing Act of 2004**
Senator Joe Lieberman
July 24, 2004

Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation to promote the sharing of homeland security information across all levels of government and to help first responders and state and local officials pay for the communications equipment they need to communicate effectively during a terrorist attack. I am delighted that the Chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee, Senator Collins, has joined me as the lead cosponsor of this legislation and that Senator Akaka is also a cosponsor.

One of the most painful and enduring lessons we should have learned from the September 11th attacks is that information about terrorist activities must be shared among federal agencies. Unfortunately, almost three years after the attacks, we have not seen the kind of improvement in information sharing at all levels that we need to have.

The widely respected, non partisan Markle Foundation -- in alliance with the Brookings Institution and the Center for Strategic and International Studies -- has studied this problem at length and concluded that an entirely new approach is needed with regard to security information sharing. According to Markle, the Cold War paradigm that strictly limited access to information is ill-suited to the challenges we face today in the age of terrorism. Sharing information between and among relevant actors is vital to our security precisely because we cannot predict from which direction the first signs of potential attack will come, as we pretty much could during the

Cold War. And yet, the federal government still has developed neither a comprehensive strategy nor actual policies to fundamentally change a 50-year old Cold War paradigm.

Equally as troubling is that too many first responders still lack the basic ability to talk to one another when responding to emergencies, including of course terrorist attack. We refer to this as interoperability. Over 300 New York City firefighters perished inside the collapsing twin towers of the World Trade Center because of poor communications about the buildings' imminent demise. The look back at that day led a lot of people to conclude we lost a lot of New York's finest because they could not communicate with one another on the equipment they had. That is no longer acceptable.

The legislation we are introducing today addresses these challenges. First, we would authorize \$3.3 billion over five years to provide reliable and consistent funding to help finance interoperability solutions. This would send a clear message to state and local officials that the federal government intends to be a full partner in providing the resources necessary to solve this problem. We would create an Office of Information Sharing within the Department of Homeland Security to develop and implement a national strategy to achieve interoperability. The office would also provide outreach and technical assistance to states, local governments, and first responders.

Second, our legislation would require the Secretary of Homeland Security, in conjunction with intelligence and other federal agencies, to establish a broad information exchange network - the System-wide Homeland Analysis and Resource Exchange Network (SHARE) -- modeled

after a Markle Foundation recommendation. This network would be designed to share homeland security information among all levels of government, consistent with national security requirements and civil liberties protections. We also establish a coordinating council - with representatives from DHS and other key agencies and state and local governments -- to ensure that procedures for sharing information are monitored, reviewed and updated, and that disputes are resolved.

Third, our legislation requires implementation of performance measures and genuine incentives to encourage employees to implement the changes that are necessary. We would require the Secretary to develop an annual performance plan, with measurable goals and actionable steps, so that progress in sharing information can be systematically monitored. Where appropriate, senior officials will be evaluated, and determinations for bonuses and awards will be based on achieving measurable progress. We would reward employees across government for developing innovative practices, procedures, or technologies to foster appropriate sharing of homeland security information.

Mr. President, as part of the continuing fight to keep Americans safe from terrorism – the test of our generation - all the cultural, technological, and administrative barriers that impede the flow of homeland security information among different levels of government and among agencies at the same level simply must be broken down. That requires strong leadership. And it requires funding. The national security of the American people will not come cheaply. A non-partisan task force of the Council on Foreign Relations recommended that the nation spend double what Senator Collins and I are proposing to ensure dependable, interoperable

communications. The federal government must do more than it is doing now, and pay its fare share, if we are to adequately protect our nation.

Our legislation will help us develop a new structure, a new paradigm of information sharing to ensure that first responders can communicate effectively with one another and with other governmental representatives when they respond to attacks or other emergencies that threaten the safety and well being of our people.

Thank you, Mr. President. I ask unanimous consent that the full text of the legislation be inserted in the record.

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