

# An Actionable Plan For A Citizens 9/11 Investigation Commission

By Senator Mike Gravel

At each 9/11 anniversary, the significance of this tragedy looms ever larger in our history. As new evidence, new whistleblowers, and new calls for reopening the investigation come forward, the work of the 9/11 truth movement grows in historic significance. All of this points to the urgent need for a new, independent, investigation with subpoena and other grand jury powers—a citizen's commission that is truly free of partisan political interference.

Many ask why we need a new investigation of 9/11. Wouldn't it be a waste of time and money in view of these budgetary hard times? President Obama answered that question just after his inauguration when he declared: "We won't look back." That decision set the tone for the Congress and mainstream media to marginalize and even suppress any public discussion of what happened to the United States on 9/11. The President has rendered a great disservice to our democracy by officially stating that we don't want to know more about the event that plunged the nation into three wars, savaged our civil rights, wasted trillions of dollars of public treasure and depressed our economy. Not looking back limits our ability to look forward. Continued ignorance about what happened on 9/11 condemns our nation to repeat the mistakes of the past, which is exactly what we are doing.

The tenth anniversary of 9/11 also reminds us of the horrors that resulted from the government's official 9/11 story. In addition to the interminable wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq, and the War on Terror, the official line also conveniently set the stage for the Patriot Act that abridged so many of our liberties and civil rights. It also set the stage for a long list of other abuses such as egregious torture of "terror suspects" in the name of national security. (Consider a prescient statement by James Madison: "If Tyranny and Oppression come to this land, it will be in the guise of fighting a foreign enemy.")

The U.S. government's investigation that culminated in the *9/11 Commission Report* purported to set the record straight about the perpetrators of terrorism on our soil and the mistakes made by those whose sacred task is to defend our shores. But this 2004 report has since been called into question by a very long list of credible voices, not only within the United States but throughout the world.

The chairman of the Commission, Governor Thomas Kean, admitted failure: "We think the Commission, in many ways, was set up to fail. Because we had not enough money, we didn't have enough time, and we [were] appointed by the most partisan people in Washington." "We to this day don't know why NORAD [the North American Aerospace Command] told us what they told us. It was just so far from the truth... It's one of those loose ends that never got tied."

Commission co-chair Congressman Lee Hamilton said: "I don't believe for a minute we got everything right...the commission was set up to fail...people should keep asking questions about 9/11..."

Commissioner Timothy Roemer said: "We were extremely frustrated with the false statements we were getting."

Senator Max Cleland resigned from the Commission, stating: "It's a national scandal."

John Farmer, a former New Jersey attorney general, who led the staff inquiry, said: "At some level of the government, at some point in time...there was an agreement not to tell the truth about what happened...I was shocked at how different the truth was from the way it was described...The tapes told a radically different story from what had been told to us and the public for two years...This is not spin. This is not true. There were interviews made of the FAA's New York center the night of 9/11 and those tapes were destroyed. The CIA tapes of the interrogations were destroyed. The story of 9/11 itself, to put it mildly, was distorted and was completely different from the way things happened."

### **If the 9/11 Commissioners and the Commission staff don't buy the official story, why should mainstream media and the American people?**

Thousands of civic volunteers calling themselves the 9/11 truth movement have gone on to parse the events of that fateful day, offering scientific and rational arguments for why the government's official account is inaccurate, incomplete, implausible, and in fact constitutes a flimsy conspiracy theory. This body of new evidence and argumentation brought forward by ordinary citizens, combined with the refusal of our political leaders to even countenance a new investigation, and the systematic marginalization of 9/11 truthers by our corporate-controlled mainstream media, adds to the suspicions that something is profoundly amiss.

### **Direct Democracy: The Way Forward**

Presently, our heroic 9/11 truth activists can continue to educate Americans and the world's people with the hope of pressing the U.S. Congress to act. However, it is evident to me that the federal government won't act to change the official 9/11 story line; and the American people simply *can't* act, given the structure of our representative democracy. All the people can do is educate, agitate and protest, and give their power away to representatives on Election Day. That's because of one obvious reality: the way to meaningful citizen participation in public policy is blocked by the elites now in control of the mainstream media and of government (regardless of party). Citizens lack access to the legislative procedures needed to implement the central power of government—lawmaking—at the federal level. Indeed, this is true as well in most governmental jurisdictions of the United States. But fortunately there are 24 states that have some form of initiative lawmaking where people can enact laws.

### **Direct Democracy for 9/11 Truth**

The cause of direct democracy has been my principal passion since my two terms in the U.S.

Senate (1969–1981). I founded and served as president of the Democracy Foundation, Philadelphia II, and Direct Democracy, nonprofit corporations dedicated to the establishment of direct democracy in the United States through the enactment of the National Initiative for Democracy (NI4D). NI4D is meta-legislation that would empower the American people as lawmakers in every government jurisdiction of the nation. We have yet to enact the National Initiative, but the process of direct democracy at the state level is available for direct action by the people. And that's why, at a gathering of 9/11 truth advocates in New York City in September 2010, I suggested a new strategy for the 9/11 truth movement: that of using the initiative process in several states as a vehicle to enact a law creating a new 9/11 citizens commission that would investigate the intelligence failures prior to 9/11, and the events during and after 9/11. My suggestion was well received in New York and subsequently in talks with 9/11 truth activists across California, the state best known for initiatives. My idea was not original in that it followed upon a campaign for an initiative under New York City law proposed by truth advocates, one that had garnered more than 80,000 petition signatures, only to be thrown out by the New York State Supreme Court.

Building on the New York experience, I approached both the California and the Oregon Legislative Counsels for assistance in drafting a prospective law that would create a new investigative commission—independent of federal and state governments—but with the necessary powers to get to the facts (i.e., subpoena and oath taking). These Legislative Counsels have bought into my concept. The vision of the commission would be to pursue an investigation wherever the evidence leads. No person would be immune from criminal implication, regardless of political station in or out of government (domestic or foreign).

I am convinced that the independence of the new commission can only be guaranteed if the appointment of its members is controlled by the vision of the 9/11 truth movement, rather than the customary commission-appointment process typically conducted by governors and legislators. Our proposal envisions that the steering committee of the Citizens 9/11 Commission campaign, made up of activists from various states, would select the commissioners from nominees proposed by the public.

The key element of the proposed initiative is the use of a Joint Powers Agreement, whereby similar laws enacted in several states are harmonized to create one single commission. The Joint Powers Agreement also facilitates the endorsement and participation of other state governments at a later time, thereby adding their grand jury powers to the Commission. Our plan envisions enacting an initiative law in one or more states. These proposed initiatives would be presented to state voters for their decision on November 6, 2012.

### **Key Strategic Considerations**

Enacting the Citizens 9/11 Commission initiative in California would have the greatest national impact. However, enactment in California would be expensive: on the order of \$1 to \$2 million to be successful. The second state with the greatest national impact is Massachusetts, sincepass Boston is the media capital of New England and one of five political hubs on the East Coast.

Oregon would also be a great state in which to wage a political campaign to enact the Citizens 9/11 Commission initiative. The timing to secure petition signatures to qualify an initiative in Oregon is very favorable. That is not the case in Massachusetts where the deadline for filing an initiative was August 3, 2011. We were able to meet that deadline and get certified approval to begin gathering signatures (received from the state's Attorney General on September 7th) thanks to a great group of local activists headed up by Rich McCampbell and Rich Aucoin. The cost of succeeding with an initiative effort in Massachusetts is about \$300,000. An Oregon effort would require a similar amount. However, unlike Oregon, Massachusetts has a short period of time to collect 68,911 valid petition signatures. To be sure that we have sufficient valid signatures, we must collect more than 80,000 by November 23, 2011. This is why Massachusetts is the top priority in our present efforts to secure the necessary funding to place an initiative on the ballot in Massachusetts.

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### **The Challenge Ahead: Building an Effective Citizen's Campaign**

Success or failure will be determined by the resources that can be brought to bear on our organizational efforts and the petition campaigns to qualify the initiatives and secure their approval by the people. **Success will require money**—the mother's milk of politics.

If we are able to raise the necessary funds for this undertaking, I believe there is no possibility of failure. Regardless what happens we will certainly advance the national debate on 9/11—alerting more Americans to the problem, and more importantly, pointing to an actionable plan where the people are the solution—not the government.

We recognize that the Citizens 9/11 Commission Campaign's fundraising efforts will compete with many elements of the truth movement whose members seek to raise funds to educate and proselytize new members for their particular vision of 9/11. Unfortunately, we know that after ten years of arduous efforts that creating awareness of what went wrong on 9/11 alone is not nearly enough, since people armed with this new information can only beg the Congress to act. The Congress won't even discuss 9/11; this approach alone is a fool's errand.

We on the steering committee hope that the various 9/11 truth groups will realize that funds committed to securing signatures on petitions to qualify initiatives in several states across the country will have to effectively communicate information about 9/11 in order for anyone to sign petitions.

**Thus, our goal is the same as the entire truth movement's desire to educate the public, except that we ask the public to act on that information right then and there by signing an initiative petition, thereby participating in a legislative process to create a new Citizens 9/11 Investigation Commission. This is real citizen action that makes all the difference in a**

**democracy.**

We, therefore, hope that all factions of the truth movement will focus their fundraising abilities on supporting our efforts, channeling funds to us at: [9-11cc.org](http://9-11cc.org) so that we can succeed in Massachusetts, then in Oregon, Colorado, and California and in any number of other states.

The 9/11 truth movement is global, since the impact of 9/11 was global. In fact, the peoples of many nations are more skeptical of the U.S. Government story line than Americans. For that reason, we hope to bring worldwide resources to bear on succeeding to enact a Citizens 9/11 Investigation Commission.

One thing I know is this: the 9/11 truth movement is grassroots; that sovereign power lies with the people; and that our fellow citizens are becoming aware of 9/11 truth in vast numbers. It is time for a winning approach to turn education to action: the method of direct democracy—*the state ballot initiative*

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