

D Block and S. 911 Talking Points

Sunday, September 11th, marks the 10 Year Remembrance of a day when our country changed forever.

On 9/11, hundreds of our nation's firefighters, police officers and paramedics lost their lives, largely because they did not have a reliable network over which they could communicate during the largest terror attack in our country's history.

A decade later, our first responders still do not have the tools needed to protect the public.

The build-out of a nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband network (PBSN) is one of the only unmet recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. Our nation's first Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge called Congress' 10 years of inaction on this key recommendation "a bloody outrage."

The recent east coast earthquake and Hurricane Irene the weekend of August 27, proved that emergencies requiring advanced communications will not stop – from natural disasters and everyday emergencies, to terrorist attacks.

During the earthquake, jammed wireless networks dropped or prevented calls, leaving many Americans on the east coast with few ways to get in touch with loved ones. This problem would be alleviated if the public safety community had a network dedicated to its needs.

U.S. Senators John Rockefeller IV (D-W.Va.) and Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) introduced ***S. 911, the Public Safety Spectrum and Wireless Innovation Act of 2011***, which would allocate the “D block” – 10 MHz of spectrum compatible with the 10MHz public safety currently holds – for the build-out of a 20 MHz nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband network (such a communications network could help prevent the future loss of first responders' lives and would allow police, firefighters and EMS workers to better protect the public through the wireless exchange of robust data and video).

The bill was overwhelmingly and favorably voted out of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee on a 21-4 bipartisan vote, but the Senate has yet to send it to the floor for a final vote. The House Committee of jurisdiction, the Energy and Commerce Committee has not even introduced nor considered legislation on this critical matter, even after holding more than four hearings this year on it.

Five bills have been introduced since January 2011, which allocate the D block to public safety - including HR607, HR2482, S.28, S.911 and S.1040 – and all five bills provide more than \$10.5B in funding derived from other spectrum proceeds to finance the build out of a nationwide, interoperable and mission-critical public safety broadband network.

Building a nationwide, interoperable broadband network for firemen, police and emergency personnel was a number one priority outlined by the 9/11 Commission yet 10 years after the terrorist attacks, and 7 years after the publication of the 9/11 Commission's final report, a bill

that would allocate the necessary spectrum to build out a nationwide, interoperable public safety broadband network is being caught up in partisan politics. We call upon the leadership of Reid, McConnell, Boehner, and Pelosi and ask them to put away their partisan politics and get this bill signed into law NOW!

For the victims of 9/11, their families and for our country, such a communications network is an investment in America's well-being, and this should be the government's first responsibility.

I hope you will join me in supporting S. 911 and telling Washington that this is a priority for you and your family.