

SENATOR JOHN EDWARDS: A PLAN TO STRENGTHEN DOMESTIC DEFENSE

Senator Edwards believes that domestic defense is the government's first and foremost responsibility, and that the current administration is not doing enough to make America safe. Edwards outlined a strategy to invest new resources in homeland security and strengthen America's defenses against the threat of further terrorist attack, consisting of four general parts:

- *Tracking down and stopping the terrorists in our midst before they hurt us*
- *Tightening our border security*
- *Strengthening security at the likeliest targets to make them less vulnerable*
- *Improving domestic readiness so we are always prepared to respond to threats*

TRACKING DOWN AND STOPPING THREATS

- **Create A Homeland Intelligence Agency.** Edwards renewed his call for a homeland intelligence agency to take on the FBI's intelligence functions. The new agency would do a better job uncovering terrorist threats before they could do harm, and would be subject to stronger civil liberties protections than the FBI today.
- **Ensure That Law Enforcement On The Front Lines Have Access To Intelligence.** Edwards called for better information sharing between federal and local law enforcement agencies. Cops on the front lines need better warning information, more security clearances, and access to newly combined federal watch lists.
- **Strengthen Standards For State IDs To Cut Down On Fraud.** Noting that 7 of the 19 hijackers on September 11th had fake IDs, Edwards called for stronger basic standards for state-issued ID, including holograms and biometric identifiers. He would give states money to help do the job.

PROTECTING OUR BORDERS

- **Hire 10,000 More Border Officials.** Edwards believes that the current border system is broken, and called for the hiring of more 10,000 more INS, Border Patrol, and consular officials.
- **Triple Investment In Information Technology.** Edwards called for a tripling of investment in information technologies used in processing immigrants and visitors. The immigration bureaucracy should be streamlined, and one standard document should be created for legal immigrants.
- **Improve Security At Seaports.** In the short-term, Edwards called for steps to improve equipment and security at our nation's ports, including sophisticated screeners at every port. In the long-term, Edwards would accelerate the move to an "EZ-Pass System," so that shippers that improved their security faster would move through ports faster.

PROTECTING THE MOST VULNERABLE TARGETS

- **Federalize Security Forces At Nuclear Plants.** Edwards called for tighter security at our nation's nuclear plants. He believes that we need a federal security force with better training, the same approach taken to airport security.
- **Department Of Homeland Security Should Issue Minimum Standards For Skyscrapers And Arenas.** Edwards called upon the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to issue minimum standards to address security threats to the nation's skyscrapers and arenas. He has called on the insurance industry to give lower premiums to owners that meet these stricter standards.
- **Improve Security For Trains, Subways, And Automobile Tunnels.** Currently, all of these targets are vulnerable: security systems are lax, ventilation is poor, and evacuation routes are inadequate. Edwards would provide funds to improve security at these facilities.
- **Improve The Security Of Government's Computer Systems.** Today only NASA has taken needed steps to close obvious holes in their cybersecurity. Edwards would require every agency to undertake the same measures in the next 9 months.

INCREASING DOMESTIC READINESS

Get Resources To First Responders:

- **Give \$1.5 Billion To States To Hire, Retain, And Deploy 75,000 Cops, Firefighters, And EMTs.** In addition to current proposals to provide \$3.5 billion for equipment, gear and training for first responders, Edwards believes that we should give states an additional \$1.5 billion in one-time aid they can use to hire and retain 75,000 cops, firefighters, and EMTs.
- **Modernize Emergency Warning System.** Edwards would establish an effective 24-hour warning system by developing public/private partnerships with media and telecommunications companies.

Tap Resources Of Young Scholars And Private Sector:

- **Offer Homeland Security Scholarships For 5 Years Of Service.** Edwards would offer scholarships for 4 years of education in exchange for 5 years of services in a homeland security shortage area, such as cybersecurity or public health.
- **Enable The National Guard To Contribute More To Homeland Security.** Edwards would establish a special homeland division with volunteers who are above the age 35 cutoff but have special skills that are critical to respond to attacks.
- **Forge Partnerships With The Private Sector.** Edwards believes that the government should work closely with the private sector on homeland security, and plans to introduce legislation requiring DHS to work with the private sector and the media to get warnings to every American in time of trouble. He has called for a \$10 million investment over 2 years.

- **Fund Communities That Ask For Readiness Responsibility From Every Citizen.** Edwards would support communities that encourage every citizen to serve — for example, for a weekend each year.

STRENGTHEN NATIONAL SECURITY AND FISCAL DISCIPLINE

- **Strengthen National Security While Restoring Fiscal Responsibility.** In October, Edwards laid out detailed proposals to restore fiscal discipline by reducing the number of federal employees outside national security by 10%, cutting unnecessary spending, closing tax loopholes, and freezing new tax cuts only for the most fortunate. With only a tiny fraction of the savings from those proposals, Edwards would strengthen homeland security—and at the same time improve the fiscal outlook tremendously.