

*The Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)
Prevention and Preparedness Act of 2009*

**Senator Joe Lieberman, Chairman, and Senator Susan Collins, Ranking Member,
U.S. Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee**

This bill responds to a warning by the prior Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell and the Congressionally-mandated Commission on the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism (chaired by former Senators Bob Graham and Jim Talent) that –

- A WMD terrorist attack is more likely than not to occur somewhere in the world by 2013, and
- A biological attack is more likely than a nuclear attack.

Accordingly, this bill implements the Commission's recommendations by providing a comprehensive framework for preventing and preparing for biological and other WMD attacks, including heightening U.S. and international lab security regarding the most dangerous pathogens, strengthening intelligence and bioforensics, improving the information provided to citizens, enhancing emergency responders' safety, and distributing countermeasures to victims. Among its key provisions, the bill would:

- Strengthen security measures at labs in the U.S. working on the pathogens most likely to be used in a biological attack, and assist labs in meeting security standards by requiring departments to conduct inspections jointly and authorizing grants to off-set labs' security costs.
- Build an international biosecurity coalition by providing assistance to foreign countries in raising their levels of biosecurity and in conducting global pathogen surveillance.
- Improve U.S. Intelligence awareness and capabilities regarding WMD and terrorism, and authorize a National Bioforensics Analysis Center to identify the perpetrators of a biological attack.
- Foster individual and community preparedness through the development and distribution of guidelines, best practices, and training materials, and by authorizing grants to States for preparedness purposes including via the Citizen Corps Program.
- Mandate a communications strategy that would disseminate crucial information after an attack, including (1) the direction of deadly biological, nuclear, chemical, or radioactive plumes emanating from the attack site and (2) whether affected citizens should evacuate or shelter-in-place.
- Protect emergency responders by (1) requiring comprehensive and up-to-date guidelines for emergency responders in handling WMD attacks, and (2) providing medical kits to emergency responders so that they can respond to WMD attacks quickly while protecting themselves.
- Build the capacity to deliver life-saving drugs quickly after an attack, including by (1) expanding the Postal Service's ability to distribute medical countermeasures, and (2) directing federal agencies to develop plans for distribution to their employees and to promoting similar preparations by private-sector employers.