

Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky
Extension of Remarks
September 9, 2011

Commemorating the 10th Anniversary of the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

Ten years ago, our nation experienced unimaginable tragedy when terrorists turned airplanes into weapons and killed thousands of Americans. Although a decade has passed since that horrible day, the wounds of September 11, 2001, are still fresh. We continue to grieve for the men and women who were killed in those brutal attacks. They are not forgotten, and our sincerest sympathies remain with their families and friends.

As Americans, that day has become a critical moment in our shared history. We all remember what we were doing on September 11, 2001; how our own lives paused in the face of national tragedy.

As we mark the tenth anniversary of 9/11, we also pay tribute to the brave public servants -- firefighters, policemen, EMTs, and volunteers, who rushed to the scene of destruction that day, many of whom lost their own lives in their efforts to help others. Men and women who, instead of fleeing the danger, ran into the flaming buildings in hopes of aiding survivors. In the days and weeks that followed, men and women came from the Chicago area and other cities and towns across the country to assist in the recovery efforts. These courageous men and women, together with the countless more who have since worked to keep our nation safe, deserve our deepest gratitude.

They also deserve our support. Last December, I was proud to vote in favor of legislation to cover the cost of medical care for the thousands of 9/11 first responders and others who became sick from breathing in toxic fumes, dust, and smoke after their heroic rescue work. This July, the World Trade Center Health Program began providing full medical screening and

treatment benefits to eligible World Trade Center responders, recovery and cleanup workers, building occupants, and residents who were directly impacted and adversely affected by the events of September 11, 2001.

And this year, we remember those who were killed that day with the knowledge that Osama bin Laden will never again be able to threaten American families with terror, thanks to the brave leadership of President Obama, the careful work of our intelligence community, and the extraordinary courage of a team of Navy Seals. We can celebrate that in the past decade, Al Qaeda has been repeatedly thwarted in its attempts to perpetrate another 9/11-style attack on our American homeland. And while we remain vigilant in the face of ongoing global threats, we cannot and will not live our lives in fear.

In the hours and days that followed the horrific attacks, Americans from all different backgrounds came together in a remarkable display of unity in the face of unspeakable violence and hatred. In my own community of Chicago, hundreds of people of all faiths – Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Jewish, and Sikh -- came together to walk down Devon Avenue. We stood shoulder to shoulder during this difficult time, to remember those who died and to pay tribute to the American values of freedom, equality, and tolerance. We stood together in solidarity, and stated that as a community that we would not allow terrorist attacks to turn us against each other.

Ten years later, we should aspire to rekindle this spirit of unity as Americans. Today, we come together to remember those who were killed, thank those who have served our communities and our nation, and celebrate the resilience of the American spirit.