



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senator O'Mara's weekly column 'From the Capitol' -- for the week of September 9, 2024 -- 'The foundation of America will again stand strong'

THOMAS F. O'MARA September 9, 2024

| ISSUE: **SEPTEMBER 11TH REMEMBRANCE DAY**



Senator O'Mara offers his weekly perspective on many of the key challenges and issues facing the Legislature.

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Senator O'Mara offers his weekly perspective on many of the key challenges and issues facing the Legislature, as well as on legislative actions, local initiatives, state programs and policies, and more. Stop back every Monday for Senator O'Mara's latest column...

This week, **"The foundation of America will again stand strong"**

A plaque on display at the National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial shares the following post-9/11 words from then President George W. Bush: "Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings. But they cannot touch the foundation of America."

At this week's 9/11 observances here at home and across our state and nation, the foundation of America will again stand strong.

The years keep passing, twenty-three now, yet Americans never forget. More than two decades later, never forgetting remains as critical as it has ever been since that terrible morning of September 11, 2001, and its long aftermath.

Throughout this 23rd Anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, observances will be held across our region and state, at the 9/11 Pentagon Memorial in the nation's capital, and at the Flight 93 Memorial near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

As always at the 9/11 Memorial & Museum in New York City, built on the footprint of the fallen Twin Towers, there will once more be a reading of the names of all 2,983 victims who perished on September 11, 2001 -- as well as the six people killed in the 1993 World Trade Center terrorist bombing. To find out and view more (including a livestream of this year's 9/11 ceremony beginning at 8:46 a.m. on Wednesday), visit the 9/11 Memorial & Museum website, 911memorial.org, where these fitting words have been shared: "Today, the 9/11 Memorial & Museum stands as a beacon of healing and renewal -- a physical embodiment of the compassion we showed to one another, the resolve we demonstrated to the world, and how, in the face of unfathomable loss, we rose as one."

Twenty-three years later, we will continue to honor the memory of 9/11's victims and keep their families in our prayers.

Twenty-three years later we will pay tribute to the heroic bravery, courage, and selflessness of the rescue and recovery workers -- the firefighters and police officers, every first responder and every citizen who gave their lives, and those who spent week after week after week at Ground Zero in tribute to the ultimate sacrifice of their fellow men and women. It is important to also remember

that the total number of victims continues to grow as those responders succumb to illnesses related to their toxic exposure during recovery efforts at Ground Zero. In 2018, the number of post-9/11 illness deaths surpassed those killed on 9/11. The number of NYFD firefighters and NYPD police officers who have died post-9/11 exceeds those killed that day. We must keep the survivors who continue to struggle with post-9/11 illnesses in our thoughts and prayers.

Twenty-three years later we will reaffirm our pride in this nation's service members, and we will keep all of them and their families in our thoughts and prayers -- including those young men and women whom we have lost from here at home. As events continue to unfold across the world, our veterans and their families must know that as a nation, we value, we respect, and we honor their remarkable service and sacrifice.

We also recognize, however, that too many American veterans struggle in crisis, and, tragically, too many of these heroes are taking their own lives. We need every veteran to know and to believe that they are never alone. The nation's Veterans Crisis Line is available around the clock to connect with caring and qualified responders with the Department of Veterans Affairs, many of whom are veterans themselves. The Veterans Crisis Line can be reached by calling 988 (then press 1) or text 838255.

As always, I also take the opportunity to recall all the many firefighters, law enforcement officers and emergency services volunteers, not-for-profit organizations, school classrooms, business leaders, and individual citizens and communities from across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions who responded in such strong, uplifting ways in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

I am grateful, each and every year on Patriot Day, for the chance to remember how so many citizens, young and old, from all walks of life and all stations, responded with a powerful, instinctive, enduring determination to help America recover and rebuild -- and how, to this very day, this memory can stand as a reminder that even in the darkest of days and troubling of times, Americans face a future of hope, that the fundamental American values of fortitude, generosity, and strength will help us carry on and keep this region, this state, and our nation looking ahead.

Twenty-three years later, Americans will undertake a responsibility and a duty as citizens to again, in the words of former President Bush, "honor the memory of the 11th day."

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