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COMMITTEES:
HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
RANKING MEMBER
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ARMED SERVICES
SPECIAL COMMITTEE
ON AGING

Dear Friends:

I want to thank all of you for your courage and commitment. This year not only marks the tenth anniversary of loss due to an act of unimaginable cruelty, but also when the Voices of September 11th network was built as support for this community. Although your losses were profoundly personal, you combined your individual voices into a powerful voice of comfort, respect, understanding, and one that called for positive change.

At a 2004 Senate committee hearing on the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, we heard a voice that had a profound effect on all of us, speaking words I will never forget. The voice belonged to Mary Fetchet, who lost her son Brad in the attack on the World Trade Center. These are her words: "When American lives are at stake, indifference or inertia is unacceptable... When critical reforms are implemented to make our country safer, I will know that neither Brad's life, nor the lives of nearly 3,000 others who perished on September 11th were lost in vain."

Another voice heard that terrible morning described with eloquent simplicity the spirit of September 11th. Amid the suffocating smoke, searing flames, and falling debris of the South Tower, the last words Fire Captain Patrick Brown spoke from the 35th floor to the outside world were these: "We're still heading up." We may never know where the courage to keep "heading up" into such danger comes from. We must always honor it. We must never forget.

As we pledge to never forget what was lost and what was given on September 11th, we must in the same breath pledge to do all that we can to prevent future attacks. I am proud to add my voice to the great unified voice you all present. Together, we will keep building a bridge to a safer future. We will ensure the lives we remember today were not lost in vain.

Ten years ago, in what seemed like a moment, September 11th was transformed from a day like any other day into one that will stand alone. The loss we relive on this day reminds us of the value of all that we must protect. The heroism reminds us of the unconquerable spirit of the American people. Our accomplishments remind us that we can meet any challenge with decisive action. As long as we keep the meaning of this day of remembrance in our hearts, we will meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Thank you, again, and for all that you have done and will continue to do.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



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