



Mary Fetchet Remarks
Daughters of the American Revolution
135th Continental Congress, Washington, DC
June 27, 2026

Thank you so much Madam President General.

I am deeply honored to receive this recognition from the Daughters of the American Revolution – an organization that stands for service, patriotism, and the preservation of what matters most: our shared history, our communities, and one another.

On September 11, 2001, the trajectory of my life changed forever when my 24 year-old son Brad was murdered while working in the South Tower at the World Trade Center.

I was a mother and a social worker. I knew nothing about terrorism, victims' rights, or national security. I certainly never dreamed of testifying before Congress 5 times about intelligence reform. The learning curve was steep, but it would have been harder for me to look the other way.

It was a chaotic and uncertain time for our families. We were planning funerals while still awaiting notification of our loved ones' remains. I quickly understood that victims' families had unique needs, and I had a vision to build an organization around four goals:

- to ensure all those impacted had the support they needed to heal;
- to commemorate the lives lost in a meaningful way;
- to do everything in my power to make sure our government was protecting its citizens;
- and to help communities impacted by other tragedies.

I learned that healing does not happen in isolation. It happens when people come together to listen, to remember, and to take action. The terrorists sought to divide and destroy us, yet what I remember most is the compassion that emerged – neighbors helping neighbors, strangers comforting strangers, and communities united by a shared humanity.

Over the past 25 years, VOICES has provided support for tens of thousands of individuals. This year alone over 3,000 have contacted us for the first time asking for help.

On 9/11 we could never have anticipated the consequences that survivors and responders are facing today. Over 150,000 are in treatment for 9/11-related illnesses, and more than 9,500 have died – three times the number of lives that were lost on 9/11. The need for help continues.

After Brad's death, I found his journal. On the first page he had written: "You can tell the character of a man by what he does for the man who can offer him nothing." That is the way Brad lived his life, and his death motivated me to take action.

However, it is the challenges of the thousands of individuals that we serve that sustains my determination to turn tragedy into purpose by honoring the lives lost and supporting those who remain, today and in the years ahead.

Through VOICES, I have had the privilege of working alongside extraordinary people – including my fellow honorees: Beth Hillman, Jay Winuk, David Paine, and Mark Desire. Together we are preserving the legacy of 9/11 and effecting change for future generations.

Thank you to my husband Frank, my family and friends, our dedicated staff, and our supporters who make our work possible.

And thank you once again to the DAR for this tremendous recognition.