



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Field Hearing Statement of Emergency Management & Technology Subcommittee**

**Rep. Dan Goldman Opening Statement**

***Evolving Threats: Security and Safety in a Post-9/11 World***

**September 12, 2023**

September 11, 2001, is etched into our collective memory as a day that brought the nation to a standstill, a day that showed the world the worst of humanity's capacity for hatred, but also the best of our resilience and unity as a city and as a nation.

On that fateful Tuesday morning, nineteen terrorists hijacked four commercial airplanes and flew two of them into the World Trade Center, one into the Pentagon and a fourth plane crashed in Shanksville, Pennsylvania en route to the Capitol that day. Nearly 3,000 people were killed that day.

Living in downtown Manhattan on September 11th, I will never forget watching the second plane hit the Towers and the soot-covered people walking down Hudson Street. Now, as the member of Congress who represents this district, I am honored that we are holding this hearing in my district to honor the lives lost on September 11 and the grief that families who lost loved ones continue to experience.

I would also like to acknowledge the survivors and families of those we lost on 9/11 who have continued to fight every single day for the truth, justice, and care that these New York heroes so deeply deserve. And for those who are still suffering from illness arising from the horrific attacks that day, please know that I and others in Congress are fighting every day so that you can receive the basic health care you so deserve for the sacrifice you made for this country and the victims of 9/11.

For me and so many others, the immediate aftermath of 9/11 was a surreal mixture of shock, disbelief, and sorrow. First responders rushed into the chaos without a second thought, demonstrating extraordinary courage. Their bravery and deep sense of duty saved many lives that day. And it also caused 343 lives of members of the FDNY to perish that day.

In the days and weeks following 9/11, the world watched as we came together in a display of unity and strength. Our community is home to countless heroes who have cared for, rebuilt, and transformed our city in the aftermath of the attacks. Their strength is a reminder of the mandate we have to ensure that evil never triumphs over the American spirit. That our democracy and freedom never succumb to those who want to undermine it.

The aftermath of 9/11 reshaped how the country dealt with terrorism and ushered in a need to strengthen our Nation's national security to ensure that such events never happen again. The Federal government changed its counterterrorism efforts following 9/11, enacting new laws, establishing the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (also known as the 9/11 Commission), and combining 22 agencies to establish the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)—in what was the largest reorganization of the Federal government since World War II.

As we remember 9/11, we must also reflect on the lessons it imparts, which is the need to continuously strengthen our homeland against terrorist attacks. 9/11 revealed significant and fundamental security challenges. For example, emergency communications challenges were identified by the 9/11 Commission as a contributing factor in the death toll.

Twenty-two years later, there have been vast improvements in communications, including the creation of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet Authority) in 2012, which established a single nationwide broadband network specifically for first responders. I hope to hear today how advancements in communications have helped improve the city's security posture and also what further investments are needed.

Another great resource that was developed after 9/11 is the Department of Homeland Security's grant programs, which provide dedicated funding to cities like New York City to help build and strengthen their defenses against terrorists. Programs like the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) and the State Homeland Security Grant Program assist in ensuring that first responders have the resources they need to defend their communities against threats. New York City, Washington, DC, and so many other places rely on these resources. I commit to doing everything that I can to ensure that these resources are robust.

It is my hope that with this hearing we will commemorate the memory of the victims and the bravery of the first responders.

New York City is my home. And it is an honor to be here for this hearing to discuss how we are going to keep our city New York Strong. And let us commit to working together, transcending our differences, and striving for a world where such tragedies become relics of the past.

I look forward to discussing with our witnesses today on how Congress can best support their efforts to help strengthen New York City.

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