



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

September 10, 2026

A Call to Commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks with America's Students

Dear Colleagues,

Tomorrow marks 25 years since the horrific terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, when al Qaeda hijackers stole the lives of 2,977 innocent Americans in New York, Washington D.C., and Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

I vividly remember September 11, 2001, and the days and weeks that followed—the fear, the anger, and the sense of vulnerability. But I also recall the remarkable expressions of patriotism and collective love of country that grew out of such an unspeakable tragedy. Amidst one of the darkest moments in our Nation's history, Americans of all ages and backgrounds pulled together to mourn, to support those who lost family and loved ones, and to rebuild from the ashes.

For students in America's K-12 schools, the September 11th terrorist attacks can be distant historical events. We cannot allow the acts of great heroism, sacrifice in service to our Nation, and profound loss endured by so many to be forgotten.

Tomorrow, students should learn the stories of the brave Americans on United Flight 93 who, facing certain death, stormed the cockpit of their hijacked airplane causing the terrorists to plunge the airplane into an empty field. Their sacrifice thwarted the terrorists' evil purpose, saving the lives of countless American strangers. Students should learn the story of Welles Crowther, the "Man in the Red Bandana," a young volunteer firefighter who saved as many as 18 lives from the burning towers, where he ultimately perished and was identified by his iconic red bandana. And students should learn about the bravery of Lieutenant Colonel Marilyn Wills, who created a "human chain" to guide her colleagues out of the Pentagon to safety.

A quarter century has passed since that terrible day, but we must never forget what September 11th means for the United States. This year, I call on American schools to educate students with moral clarity about the events of that day and its significance for the Nation's history. Educators can achieve this by incorporating an age-appropriate lesson about 9/11, a moment of silence to mark the time the first plane struck the World Trade Center, or by asking students to share their own reflections about that tragic day.

Teachers have a solemn responsibility to ensure that future generations of Americans feel connected to their country's history. On the anniversary of September 11th, that means understanding the terrible reality of the attacks and the incredible response from American citizens. It was a time of immense sorrow for the loss of innocent lives at the hands of radical Islamist terrorists. It was a time of solidarity in which Americans came together to give blood,

joined our armed forces, and supported their neighbors. It was a time when the American people demonstrated courageous resolve, standing strong in the face of evil.

Tomorrow, please provide your students with the opportunity to honor the victims, heroic first responders, great patriots, and the service members who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country on September 11th and in the ensuing global war on terrorism, and their surviving family members who carry their legacy forward.

I encourage every school in the Nation to join me in observing a [moment of silence](#) tomorrow and play your part in fulfilling the promise to *Never Forget*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Linda McMahon", with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Linda E. McMahon

Attachment: Patriot Day, 2026 Presidential Proclamation



Patriot Day, 2026

The 25th Anniversary of the September 11 Terrorist Attacks

By The President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

A quarter of a century has passed since the terrible day of September 11, 2001, and an entire generation of Americans has now come of age with no living memory of that fateful day. The passage of time must never dim what will forever burn bright in the conscience of our Nation. Amid the ashes of Ground Zero, we made a solemn vow to Never Forget—a vow that must be renewed in every American heart, taught in every classroom, and honored in every community across our land.

Twenty-five years ago, beneath a clear September sky, the peace of our Nation was shattered when radical Islamic terrorists hijacked four commercial jet planes and converted them into weapons of mass murder.

At 8:46 a.m. American Airlines Flight 11 was deliberately flown into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City. Shadowing closely behind was United Airlines Flight 175 and within a span of 17 minutes, the South Tower was struck. At that moment, it became clear that our Nation was under attack. Before the morning had passed, both soaring towers—the premier symbols of American economic strength and prosperity—had collapsed into the city below, claiming thousands of innocent lives and leaving behind unfathomable destruction. The time was 10:28 a.m.

Just 34 minutes later, at the edge of our Nation’s capital in Arlington, Virginia, American Airlines Flight 77 was flown into the Pentagon, the fortress of American military might, striking down members of our Armed Forces and dedicated civil servants. Amid smoke and flames, survivors turned back into the burning building to carry survivors to safety.

But the horror of that morning was not over. Aboard United Airlines Flight 93, passengers learned through frantic cellphone calls of the terror already unfolding in New York and Virginia. Knowing that their plane was being used as a weapon, they resolved to fight back. Among them was Todd Beamer, a devoted husband, father, and man of deep faith, who calmly led his fellow passengers in a recitation of the Lord’s Prayer before speaking his last, immortal words: “Are you ready? Okay. Let’s roll.” With those immortal words, the heroes of Flight 93 mounted a daring assault on the hijackers and forced the aircraft down in a field outside of Shanksville, Pennsylvania, just 20 minutes flying time from their intended target of our Nation’s capital. In laying down their lives, those 40 patriots transformed a quiet field into hallowed ground—leaving behind an everlasting testament to the unbreakable will of the American people.

In just a little over two hours on Tuesday, September 11, 2001, 2,977 innocent souls perished in the most despicable act of terror in the history of our country. Yet amid the wreckage and carnage of that day, the world witnessed the courage, valor, and patriotism of America. Members of the New York City Police Department, the Fire Department of the City of New York, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, worked around the clock beside almost 100 emergency and first responder agencies to save those still trapped in the rubble and ensure the safe evacuation of untold thousands of New York City residents. Rescue workers, medical personnel, and thousands of volunteers answered the call, risking their own lives and giving everything they had to help fellow Americans.

In the hours and days that followed September 11, 2001, our Nation came together with a unity and purpose that is distinctively American. We mourned as one people. We prayed as one Nation. We resolved, with iron will, that those who attacked us would feel the full measure of American strength. The terrorists sought to break our spirit—they failed. They sought to divide us—they could not. They sought to make us afraid—instead, they awakened the mightiest force for justice the world has ever known.

In the days, months, and years that followed, thousands of American patriots stepped forward to wear the uniform of the United States Armed Forces. They left behind their families and communities, crossed oceans, and carried the fight to our enemies in distant battlefields so the horrors of that September morning would never again reach our shores. For nearly a quarter century, an entire generation of warriors served, fought, and sacrificed in defense of our freedom. Many gave their last full measure of devotion, and countless others returned home bearing the seen and unseen wounds of war. Our Nation owes them a debt that can never be repaid.

That September morning changed our country forever, teaching us that oceans alone could no longer shield our homeland from the forces of evil, that liberty must always be guarded by a free and vigilant people, and that the strength of our Republic will always prevail. As President, I have no higher duty than to ensure the safety and well-being of the American People, and from the very first day I returned to office, my Administration has been unwavering in its commitment to ensure that our Nation is defended by the strongest and most lethal military the world has ever known. I will never hesitate to protect our country by enforcing a foreign policy of peace through strength, bringing swift justice to our enemies wherever they hide, and vigorously defending our national security interests at home and abroad.

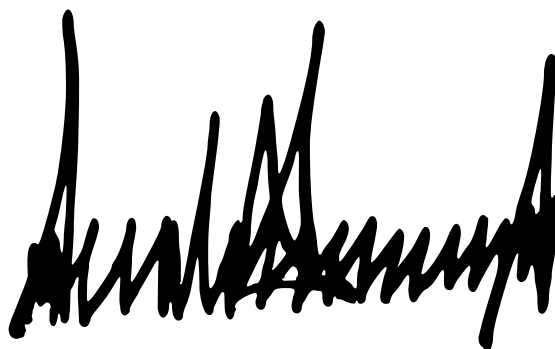
Today, the hatred that struck us on September 11 still exists, and the lessons of that day remain as urgent as ever. We must defend our sovereignty, our values, and our sacred birthright to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We must protect our treasured way of life against all those who seek our destruction—whether they threaten us from foreign lands or from among us within our borders. Most of all, we must ensure that the memory of September 11 never fades into history, but remains a living inheritance passed from one generation of Americans to the next.

For millions of Americans, the memories of September 11, 2001, remain as vivid today as they were 25 years ago. We will never forget the 2,977 precious lives taken from us, we will always cherish their memories, and we will forever hold their families in the enduring embrace of our Nation. We stand in unending gratitude to the first responders who answered the call of duty, including the thousands who continue to suffer from serious health conditions caused by their service. We honor the warriors of our Armed Forces who have defended the sacred cause of freedom in the quarter century since. Above all, we ask Almighty God to keep our Republic forever safe, forever united, and forever free.

By a joint resolution approved December 18, 2001 (Public Law 107-89), the Congress designated September 11 of each year as “Patriot Day.”

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim September 11, 2026, as Patriot Day, 2026. I call upon all departments, agencies, and instrumentalities of the United States to display the Flag of the United States at half-staff in honor of the 2,977 victims of the attacks of September 11, 2001. I also invite the Governors of the United States and its Territories, and interested organizations and individuals, to join in this observance.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fifty-first.

A large, bold, handwritten signature in black ink, characteristic of Donald J. Trump, is positioned at the bottom of the page. The signature is highly stylized with many sharp, upward-pointing strokes.