

Who can forget the courageous first responders running up the stairs of burning buildings—with total disregard for their own safety—saving some at the expense of their own lives.

On the morning of 9/11, I got a mere glimpse—I say again a glimpse—into the sense of horror suffered by the victim's families when I couldn't reach my own brother Tom—an American Airlines 757 Captain who often piloted Flight 11 from Logan to LA, the flight that crashed into the North Tower.

Stuck in traffic within sight of the burning Pentagon, cell phones were all but gridlocked. At noon, I got through. He and his flight attendant wife Sandy were safe but were in anguish because they knew the pilots and crew on board Flight 11.

For the families of the victims—and I got to know and work with several including Kathy Wisniewski who lost her husband and today works on my staff, the Jersey Girls and Theresa Velardi, the news that day was absolutely devastating.

Both then—and now 16 years later—words are still inadequate to convey our empathy for those who died and for the victim's families.

For many, their faith in God has helped them survive and overcome.

Yet for 16 years, the families have had to endure their loss and a broken heart.

Which reminds me of that haunting song in *Les Misérables* after one of the main characters loses many of his friends in a battle at a barricade:

There's a grief that can't be spoken
There's a pain goes on and on;
Empty chairs and empty tables . . .
Where my friends will meet no more . . .

Yes, empty chairs and empty tables in New Jersey and elsewhere but those chairs and tables are not empty in heaven.

Yesterday, I attended a 9/11 memorial in Colts Neck, New Jersey. Theresa Velardi, who lost her dad, Paul James Furmato, on September 11, was eloquent in her moving statement, which I include in the RECORD:

I have not spoken at a memorial like this before, so I hope you will all bear with me as I try to get through this. First, I want to thank Lillian for giving me the opportunity to speak today. I would like to thank everyone who takes care of this memorial and the township of Colts Neck for providing me with a place to come to remember and to be with my Dad. And I also want to thank all of you for coming out today and always keeping the families and first responders of 9/11 in your hearts and your prayers.

My father, Paul James Furmato, was an institutional sales trader and a Vice-President at Cantor Fitzgerald. He was taken away from me 16 years ago and my entire family dynamic was changed. I remember waking up morning after morning watching my mother fight back her tears and try her best to raise 3 children on her own. I remember waking up every day after the twin towers crashed wondering, "does this mean Dad is really never coming home?" I remember being a Girl Scout in Colts Neck and having to skip Father-Daughter dances because my father was murdered. I remember hoping and praying, even years later, that my Dad would come walking through the door one day and that this was all a really horrible dream.

But it wasn't a dream. And my family would be changed forever. The entire country would be changed forever. You don't remember much from when you were 6, but you never forget the feeling of losing a fa-

ther. You never forget the pain, the devastation, or the confusion. And it wasn't just my family. Families from around the country lost loved ones. There was true devastation felt all around after the twin towers fell. The country went into a state of shock.

But shortly thereafter, something incredible happened. We came together. We united with those around us and worked towards repairing New York City, repairing broken families, and repairing the damage in our hearts. In this country, we support each other. In Monmouth County, we support each other. And in my hometown Colts Neck, we support each other. This community picked each other up off the ground. I remember Cedar Drive Middle School teachers and Conover Road Elementary School teachers showing up at my house days after with food and condolences. All types of Colts Neck residents showed up at my door to lend my mom the support and prayers she truly needed.

As devastating as 9/11 was for my family and for our entire community, it reminded all of us to help each other and look out for one another. It reminded us that no matter how bad things may get, there is always a better tomorrow. No matter what age we are or what troubles we face, we can overcome. We can fight through it and we can work together to rebuild.

My father's life was taken from him at 37 years old. My mother lost her husband, her soul mate after spending 17 years with him. She was left with heartbreak and three children at impressionable ages. Yet she continued to wake up every morning to provide and to care for her children. She refused to let the hatred of others consume her own heart and mind. I grew up watching a woman never give up and I knew I wanted to follow in her footsteps.

I am 22 years old. I'm a college graduate from Fordham University with a double degree in Philosophy and Political Science. I run an office as the Executive Director at the Monmouth County Republican Committee. I am working towards my J.D. at Seton Hall Law School on the weekends. I live on my own and I try my very best to balance everything going on in my life. I strive every single day to make my Father proud in Heaven. When life becomes overwhelming or stressful or it all just feels like too much, I come here and I sit right on that bench with Paul James Furmato's name on it. I sit here with my Father beside me. Just this past week, my world felt like it was caving in. But I came here and I sat with my Dad. I prayed I was making him proud in Heaven and I promised him yet again that I will continue to work hard every single day to be the best daughter I can be no matter what life throws my way.

At times, life gets difficult. I have seen that and experienced that first hand. We see heartbreak and disasters like the storms passing through Texas and Florida just this past week. The only thing we can do when life hits us hard is overcome. We have to reflect on tragedies like 9/11 and allow them to help us grow.

REINFORCING EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY IN DEVELOPMENT ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. MARCY KAPTUR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, September 8, 2017

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this vital agreement brokered be-

tween the President and Congressional leaders. This is a must pass bill to bring much-needed relief to those devastated by Hurricane Harvey and those who will be hit by Hurricane Irma. Indeed, it allows for a short-term extension of the debt ceiling to avoid default and keeps our government functional at a time of natural disaster and ongoing crisis.

Thank you to the President and our Leadership for pulling the nation back from the brink again. I hope that it will bring a return to bipartisan compromise and regular order. We must move away from the destabilizing cycle of moving from one manufactured crisis to the next, with no adopted budget for FY 2018 resulting in arbitrary spending allocations passed down from the Majority's Leadership.

Congress should provide the American people with a 2018 final budget to assure a government funded at a level that provides stability and security.

Let's put politics aside and pass this bill. Then, let us embark on bipartisan negotiations to develop a new budget agreement which allows for adequate caps for both defense and non-defense spending.

I urge my colleagues to support this package for the benefit of our nation.

NEW YORK TIMES OP-ED BY GOVERNOR CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, September 11, 2017

Ms. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, former Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Christine Todd Whitman wrote recently in *The New York Times* about "the dangerous political turn of an agency that is supposed to be guided by science."

Governor Whitman, a Republican who served as EPA Administrator under President George W. Bush, has a stark warning about the direction the Agency is taking under President Donald Trump and EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt: "Policy should always be rooted in unbiased science. The EPA is too important to treat like a reality TV show. People's lives and our country's resources are at stake."

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the entirety of Governor Whitman's op-ed in *The New York Times*, "How Not to Run the E.P.A.":

I have been worried about how the Environmental Protection Agency would be run ever since President Trump appointed Scott Pruitt, the former attorney general of Oklahoma, to oversee it. The past few months have confirmed my fears. The agency created by a Republican president 47 years ago to protect the environment and public health may end up doing neither under Mr. Pruitt's direction,

As a Republican appointed by President George W. Bush to run the agency, I can hardly be written off as part of the liberal resistance to the new administration. But the evidence is abundant of the dangerous political turn of an agency that is supposed to be guided by science.

The E.P.A.'s recent attack on a reporter for *The Associated Press* and the installation of a political appointee to ferret out grants containing "the double C-word" are only the latest manifestations of my fears, which