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## REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11TH

Few words can be added that can explain the feeling of most Americans describing September 11, 2001. This is the twentieth anniversary of that horrific event in which our nation was attacked and our world changed. Terrorists called al-Qaeda, with training camps all around the world were responsible for the death of the more than 3,000 victims. This is an enemy unlike any we have ever faced. There are multiple countries, multiple fronts, and multiple threats included with this adversary.

The enemy then, just like now is committed to the absolute destruction of the American way of life and imposing their beliefs and values upon the world. In their world, the law is determined by force; those with power—whether military strength or political dominance—make the rules. It is our belief in freedom, human rights, idealism, personal responsibility, and economic opportunity that these extremists dislike the most. What unified us then no longer unifies us, meaning that in some measure the terrorists impacted us in ways we cannot imagine.

If you were a classroom teacher today, how would you address the events of September 11, 2001, with your students? Would you blame the incident on the very people who lost their lives? Would you blame those with a misguided ideology for killing innocent people? To me, the answer is very apparent. And those who would blame victims or our nation for September 11<sup>th</sup> are siding with evil-doers and encouraging violence.

Jeremiah Wright shocked our nation with his comment in 2008, parroting a Malcolm X phrase, that “America’s chickens are coming home to roost,” which was widely understood as meaning that America brought the September 11 attacks upon itself. Every year that has passed since 2001 that sentiment has been voiced in one manner or another. Eventually, that will end up in our classrooms and textbooks. I fear that the victims will be posthumously put on trial while the terrorists are seen as genial freedom fighters. Nothing could be further from the truth.

It seems to many that we treat perpetrators of evil kinder than we treat their victims in our society. It is an obvious assault on law and order. It is the law that enables man to live together and create order out of chaos. We are first and foremost a nation of laws. Founding Father and later president John Adams called America “a nation of laws, not of men.” These rules should not be subject to the whims of those in power. And those who fail to understand history in the proper context will write textbooks to inform future generations. It is why curriculum has been and will continue to be, a highly debated issue.

### SUMMARY

*We must remember September 11th in our homes and our classrooms and engage in this important dialogue. Never let it be said that the flame of freedom was extinguished on our watch.*

I accept that countries lie to their citizens and that we are, regrettably, governed by men and women who are sometimes corrupt. That is undesirable, but it is a fact of life. Often choices made by the government are too often not between good and bad, but between bad and worse. We have done exactly what George Washington warned us against by embracing entangling alliances. We have largely abandoned our Judeo-Christian heritage, in fear of lawsuits and the name of inclusion. However, we still have the rule of law, right?

I am reminded of Robert Kennedy's speech in which he was discussing the law. He said about the law: "The road ahead is full of difficulties and discomforts. But as for me, I welcome the challenge. I welcome the opportunity, and I pledge to you my best effort — all I have in material things and physical strength and spirit to see that freedom shall advance and that our children will grow old under the rule of law."

People of reason can disagree with issues and have civil discourse. "Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his facts," according to the late Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Moynihan also reminded us that culture, not politics, determines the success of our society.

Respect for our fellow human beings is the core outgrowth of a nation committed under a rule of law. It is our shared history in America and one in which we must be personally committed to following. That is the real lesson to teach. If we fail to pass that to the next generation, freedom, the political process, civil liberties, individual rights, and media independence will be lost to the dustbin of history and no longer tolerated.

We must remember September 11th in our homes and our classrooms and engage in this important dialogue. Never let it be said that the flame of freedom was extinguished on our watch. That can be summed up in two words: **We Remember!**

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*JC Bowman is the Executive Director of Professional Educators of Tennessee, a non-partisan teacher association headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee. Permission to reprint in whole or in part is hereby granted, provided that the author and the association are properly cited. For more information on this subject or any education issue please contact Professional Educators of Tennessee. To schedule an interview please contact [communications@proedtn.org](mailto:communications@proedtn.org) or 1-800-471-4867.*