

Subject Line: Remembering 9/11, A Day That Changed the World – 20 Years Later



The DeKalb Republican Party

Remembering 9/11, A Day That Changed the World – 20 Years Later

A SPECIAL CONNECTING WITH THE CHAIRMAN



Mike Bryan
1st Vice Chairman
1stViceChair@DeKalbGOP.org

William Freeman
2nd Vice Chairman
2ndViceChair@DeKalbGOP.org

Michael Braun
3rd Vice Chairman
3rdViceChair@DeKalbGOP.org

Bobbie Frantz
Treasurer
Treasurer@DeKalbGOP.org

Jan Appling
Secretary
Secretary@DeKalbGOP.org

Craig Schneider
Communications Officer
Communications@DeKalbGOP.org

Jodi Diodati
Administrative Officer
Administrative@DeKalbGOP.org

Hello Fellow DeKalb County Republicans,

Today is September 11, 2021. While many of us are old enough to remember where we were on this day twenty years ago, thirteen young heroes just came home in flag draped coffins during the botched Afghanistan evacuation – all but one too young to remember 9/11/2001.

With the hustle bustle of life, I can barely remember what I did last week but I vividly remember September 11, 2001 like it was yesterday. Except this day was twenty years ago and I WILL NEVER FORGET.



On the first few anniversaries of September 11, 2001, I found it very difficult to travel on an airplane. I would avoid being on a plane altogether or would travel to my destination on September 10th or wait until September 12th to travel. As time progressed and the realization that my livelihood involved traveling from city to city, I decided that I had to fly on 9/11. With reassurances from my husband that 9/11 is the safest day to fly each year, I have once again embraced flying on 9/11.

Today, I'm returning from CornCon, a cyber security conference in Iowa – on 9/11/2021 – twenty years later, life is a full circle. Ironically my husband was the one flying on 9/11/2001 to Washington DC.

While he was in the air that morning, I was organizing a cyber security event with Secureworks, McAfee and the FBI at The Omni Hotel in Atlanta – adjacent to CNN Center. During our breakfast seminar, suddenly all of the FBI agents abruptly left our seminar as their pagers

and cell phones went off with alerts as to what was unfolding in New York. My CEO asked what is going on, why are they all leaving – we had no idea as to what was occurring, beyond someone said a plane hit the World Trade Center.

I made my way to CNN's now crowded lobby only to see the North Tower of the World Trade Center on fire and confirming that a plane had hit it. I then realized that my husband, Robert was flying to DC, but did not know if he was traveling on Delta or United as the business trip was booked last minute. I called Delta and was on the phone with a customer service agent asking if Robert was in the air at that time and if she could see his plane on the radar. I was explaining to her where I was and what I was watching. Then the second plane hit the South Tower. In a total panic and not sure if my eyes were playing tricks on me, I ask again if she can see the radar. She calmly told me she did not have access to this information, as she did not work in the tower. I thanked her for her help and started to obsessively call Robert's cell phones. At first my calls went into voicemail, but it changed - it rang and rang. He was landing at this point and had begun checking voicemail messages on his phone and office. After putting me in voicemail several times, he finally answered! I was so relieved to hear his voice, knowing he was not on either of the planes that had crashed into the towers. Shortly after we hung up the phone, another plane crashed into the Pentagon. Knowing he had just landed in DC, realizing he often stays near the Pentagon, I called again to check on Robert, his sister who lives in Roslyn, Virginia at the time and friends. I wanted Robert to come home immediately from DC, but he refused and thought it was unsafe to immediately leave DC – based on reports on the radio – which all turned out to be false. I was an obsessive caller that day, but grateful that I had my husband to call and would come home shortly. He drove back on September 12 with several stranded coworkers from Atlanta that were in DC on business, just like he was that day.

For all of us, September 11, 2001 is an inflection point one that had a life before the terrorist attacks and then an altered life after. Over 3,000 Americans were killed on that sunny early Fall morning when two hijacked airplanes crashed into the World Trade Center towers in New York City, another plane plowed into the Pentagon and a fourth plane was brought down into a Pennsylvania field by heroic passengers who were the first to fight back against terrorists.

Following the 9/11 Attacks, Americans were consumed by fear, grief, and outrage, they turned to our leaders for action. Congress and the White House answered with an unprecedented expansion of military, law enforcement and intelligence powers aimed at rooting out and stopping terrorists, at home and abroad. When **President George W. Bush** addressed Congress and the nation on September 20, 2001, he made a case for a new kind of military response. It was not going to be a targeted air strike on a single training facility or weapons bunker, but rather a wide-ranging global **“War on Terror”**.

“Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there,” said President Bush. “It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.”

American support for the “War on Terror” became mixed as the campaign continued for years in an effort to target multiple terrorist cells and rogue regimes across the world. Thousands of American troops were killed in the first two decades of the War on Terror. Many more returned home with physical and psychological wounds. Yet the ever-present shadow of 9/11, kept U.S. troops on the ground in Afghanistan and elsewhere for nearly two decades.

The security measures put in place after 9/11 appear to have foiled or discouraged many ambitious plots by foreign agents on American soil. But in the process, the country has faced an “endless” War on Terror that has indelibly altered the fabric of American life.

The Trump administration devised a plan and reached an agreement with the Afghan Government and the Taliban to extract our Citizens, Military and those who supported our efforts in Operation Enduring Freedom. Unfortunately, Trump lost the 2020 election to Biden.

The Biden administration didn’t follow any of the directives that had been established by the Trump Administration. Biden’s policies of America Last has clearly been demonstrated by his administration’s failure to successfully leave in Afghanistan in a peaceful, orderly manner.

Instead, Biden pulled out the Military first, leaving behind hundreds if not thousands of American Citizens behind enemy lines and the Afghans that supported our missions who had been promised our help in getting out of the country when we left. Biden told them all good luck – leaving hundreds of Americans behind and an unknown number of people we promised to get out – turning his back on his own citizens.

Biden has enabled Afghanistan to fall to the Taliban, ISIS-K and other terrorist groups creating a terrorist paradise, where they can operate unfettered. The same people who created a sanctuary country for Osama Bin Laden, al-Qaeda, ISIS, The Haqqani Network and dozens of other terrorist groups. In fact, Biden handed them an \$85 Billion State-of-the-Art Arsenal launching a “kindler-gentler” Taliban 2.0.

Twenty years later, I no longer feel safer from a terrorist attack. In fact, I am fearful of what may come next as the Biden/Harris administration treats the Taliban as a trusted business partner, instead of a terrorist organization who has its’ leadership on the FBI’s Most Wanted List.

While poor political decisions surrounding the chaotic U.S. departure from Afghanistan and the collapse of the Afghan government have made America and our allies less safe, today, let’s pause to remember the events of that tragic day. Let us honor the victims, the heroism of first responders and those that made the ultimate sacrifice during Operation Enduring Freedom.

As Billy Franklin Graham said to President Donald J. Trump, “Courage is contagious. When a brave man takes a stand, the spines of others are often stiffened”. Let’s hope that rings true. May God Bless America.

With Best Regards,

Marci McCarthy

[Marci McCarthy](#)
[DeKalb GOP Chairman](#)
Chairman@DeKalbGOP.org

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Contact:
Marci McCarthy
Chairman
The DeKalb Republican Party
Chairman@DeKalbGOP.org
P: 678.948.7329

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