

Testimony of Ranking Member John Katko

December 7, 2021

Natural Resources Committee

Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands

Chairman Neguse, Ranking Member Fulcher,

thank you for allowing me to testify today on

HR 5230, the *9/11 Memorial and Museum Act*.

Twenty years after the horrific September 11th

attacks, it's important that we don't let them

become a relic of the past.

More than 70 million Americans have been born

since the attacks – let that sink in for a minute –

more than 70 million Americans have no

memory of the day that forever changed this country and even the world.

As the 9/11 Commission cited in their report, we as a country can never again suffer from a “failure of imagination” in how we think about the security of our homeland.

However, as time passes and we get further away from the attacks, we risk forgetting the lessons that we so painfully learned that day.

As was said by George Santayana, “Those Who Do Not Learn History Are Doomed To Repeat It.”

The 9/11 Memorial and Museum is a truly fitting tribute honoring the lives of the 2,983 people killed in the September 11, 2001 terror attack at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and on Flight 93, as well as the six people killed in the World Trade Center bombing on February 26, 1993.

More than 51 Million people have visited the Memorial & Museum since it opened in 2011.

This includes visitors from all 50 States and more than 170 countries, including more than

100 heads-of-state and 300 Members of Congress.

As one of its primary missions, the Memorial and Museum works to educate present and future generations about the attacks.

I see this as maybe the most vital part of their mission.

Unfortunately, the 9/11 Memorial and Museum has not been immune to the economic hardships experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the start of the pandemic, the 9/11 Memorial and Museum had to close its doors for 6 months.

Even once it was able to re-open, the 9/11 Memorial and Museum could not accommodate the same number of visitors it had in the past.

As a result, it is experiencing a significant shortfall in funding to keep the Memorial and Museum open to the public.

One of the largest expenses the museum incurs month after month is for security for the grounds. Whether the museum is open or closed these expenses accrue.

The bill I introduced, along with Chairman Bennie Thompson, will support the 9/11

Memorial and Museum—a non-profit organization—by providing it funding to ensure that the grounds and facilities can remain open safely and allow space for visitors to remember and honor everyone touched by that fateful day. Specifically, this bill requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide a one-time grant to the 9/11 Memorial and Museum for the operation, security, and maintenance of its facilities and grounds in New York City, once the Secretary has determined that the 9/11 Memorial and Museum meets certain criteria.

The bill currently has 40 additional cosponsors.

Within 90 days after enactment, the bill requires a report to Congress on how the 9/11 Memorial and Museum spent the grant funding.

As a nation, I believe that we owe it to both those that lived through the attacks and those who were not even born to preserve the memory of the people who made the ultimate sacrifice, and to remember and build on the lessons we learned.

So, again, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member, thank you for holding this legislative hearing. I

appreciate the opportunity to talk about my bill
and the 9/11 Memorial and Museum.