



NEWS

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FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE BOARD CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS COMMEMORATING EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Chairman John T. Korsmo of the Federal Housing Finance Board made brief remarks today at an agency gathering to mark the anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. His comments follow:

Thank you joining us this morning for a few moments ...solemn moments of reflection ...and determination.

A year ago terrorists attacked and murdered in the skies of America, at the World Trade Center, across the river at the Pentagon, and, at the end, in a Pennsylvania field.

Men, women and children from more than 60 countries were killed in these acts of great evil, but make no mistake - America, and Americans, were the target. Our fellow countrymen and countrywomen died, first and foremost, because they were citizens of a nation dedicated to freedom.

There are events that will always place us in a distinct time, and a distinct location.

For my parents' generation, that event was Pearl Harbor. I don't think there's an American of that age who cannot precisely recall where he or she was when they got the news of the attack.

And for those of my generation, it was the assassination of President John F. Kennedy that was such an event, or perhaps the first landing on the moon, an event that will always be frozen in time and place.

My understanding is that there were four of our examiners last year who were at the World Trade Center, in Tower VII, when the attack occurred. We all know people here who witnessed the attack on the Pentagon.

Certainly, for all of us, the first stunning realization that our country was under attack was something we will never forget, and indeed, we must never forget. Three thousand lives were taken because terrorism invaded the skies of America and touched our shores.

We must never forget the people who sacrificed for others that day, the firefighters, the police officers,

the brave passengers on Flight 93, and the unknown heroes - maybe hundreds of them - who will only be remembered by the people they saved or comforted.

We must never forget the people who hate America, people who would destroy our country, who are still at large. We know we cannot placate them. We must defeat them.

Allan and I and a number of people in this room had the opportunity to conduct our board meeting in July in New York City. The night before, Arnie and a couple of us went to the baseball game at Yankee Stadium. It was a great game, but the thing I will never forget was in the "Seventh Inning Stretch," when the entire stadium, 49,000 fans, stood and joined Kate Smith on the giant screen in singing the chorus of God Bless America.

We all know the chorus, but what is sometimes forgotten is, as originally recorded, God Bless America has a spoken introduction, words, of course, written by Irving Berlin in the days shortly before the outbreak of World War II. Let me tell you, read you, the words that are in that introduction.

When the storm clouds gather far across the sea
Let us swear allegiance to a land that's free
Let us all be grateful to a land so fair
As we raise our voices in a solemn prayer

Across the nation today, many voices will be raised in solemn prayer. Yet at the same time, we will fall silent in remembrance, and silent, too, in solemn prayer.

I think the hour has arrived. Please join me in a moment of silence of remembrance of those who died.

(MOMENT OF SILENCE)

God bless us, and God bless America.

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