

**Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for giving me the opportunity to join you this morning as we remember one of the most defining moments in our great nation's history.**

**We are reminded from the aftermath of September 11th that America is a nation of resilient, compassionate and determined people.**

**The terrorists who struck our country failed in their attempt to scare us from our way of life. They failed in their bid to deter us from being Americans and the freedoms we cherish.**

**As the president said on that fateful day nine years ago, "terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve."**

**So today is about remembering those who died and sacrificed their lives in a courageous attempt to save others. We shall never forget their bravery and sacrifice.**

**America was targeted nine years ago because we are the embodiment of freedom and opportunity in the world. And no one will keep us from continuing to live that way.**

**September 11th served as a wakeup call for our Nation. In the years that have followed, Congress has worked to better secure the United States. Make no mistake; we are more secure than we were on September 11th, but more needs to be done.**

**We must continue to work to ensure that the Department of Homeland Security, our military, the Intelligence Community, and State and local law enforcement have the tools they need to further secure our country and succeed in the Global War on Terrorism. We must never forget the lessons we learned from the attacks and we must remain vigilant.**

**As we remember the fallen on September 11th, we must also remember the Americans both at home and abroad who stand watch on the frontlines of a continuing battle against violent extremism.**

**Alas, we must never forget the great sacrifices of America's true heroes. It is these courageous men and women who have defined the meaning of patriotism and heroism. They embody the American spirit that has forged a better future for our Nation's children and grandchildren. It is this spirit of America, which draws so many to look to our great nation, as a beacon of liberty the world over.**

**I would like to personally thank each and every American who has put their life on the line defending this nation at home and abroad in order to keep our homeland safe from another 9/11.**

**God bless those who died on 9/11 and God bless those who continue to stand guard on our shores and in foreign lands in the name of our continued freedom.**

**Thank you and May God bless America.**

***Congressman Bilirakis is a member of the Committee on Homeland Security. He is Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Management, Investigations, and Oversight.***