

Statement of Robert Kasdin,  
Board Member, National September 11 Memorial & Museum

In Support of H.R. 3036,  
*The National 9/11 Memorial at the World Trade Center Act*

Committee on Natural Resources,  
Subcommittee on Federal Lands

Chairman McClintock, Ranking Member Tsongas and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity here today on the 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the attacks on our nation, to testify on the *National 9/11 Memorial at the World Trade Center Act*.

Each one of us has a memory of we were on that beautiful morning fourteen years ago. After dropping my twins at Kindergarten, I sat in the Michigan Union in Ann Arbor, the same building where John F Kennedy first expressed the idea that became the Peace Corps, having coffee with a colleague.

When I learned about the planes hitting the north and south tower, I headed back to the office and started to call one of my closest friends who worked in the South Tower. And with that began 36 hours that began in horror and ended with hints of hope. I called my friend repeatedly that Tuesday and got his voicemail, which I incorrectly thought meant he was fine. After many hours without hearing from him, as the dimensions of the horror grew clear, I visited his mother who happened to live in Ann Arbor and listened to her try to accept that in the face of his silence she knew she had now lost a second son. The first one to heart disease, the second one murdered.

And then, on that Wednesday night, I attended a multi-faith service on the Diag, the heart of the University of Michigan campus. I was told twenty thousand people attended, and as the Executive Vice President of the university, my security force was to maintain order. But most of our security officers were all at the airport at the request of the state government. I had about six security people at a convocation of 15,000. But that evening, grieving over my own loss of the dozen people I knew, including my close friend, I felt hope. The gathering that evening was about faith and community and bearing witness to those who were killed and wounded. We as a community and we as a nation and we as a world had come together as I had never seen before.

When I returned to New York, my hometown, and was asked to join the 9/11 Memorial Board in 2004 as Finance Co-Chair, I seized the offer so I could continue to heal, so we could continue to heal, and so we would bear witness to loss, to that days acts of courage, and to our commitment to leave this world better for the kids I dropped at school that September morning and everyone else's children.

**The 9/11 Memorial**, which some of you I know have visited, is a tribute of remembrance and honor to the 2,977 people killed in the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and on flight 93 near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, as well as the six people killed in the World Trade Center bombing on February 26, 1993. People who simply got up and went to work that day fourteen years ago, just like we did today.

Dedicated on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the attacks, on September 11, 2011, the 9/11 Memorial was designed to create a public space to remember and reflect on the lives lost, to recognize the endurance of those who survived, the courage of those who risked their lives to save others, and the compassion of all who supported them and our nation.

The Memorial occupies approximately half of the 16-acre World Trade Center complex and features two recessed reflecting pools, each about an acre in size each [the largest manmade waterfalls in North America—and probably the world], set within the footprints of the original Twin Towers. The surrounding plaza consists of more than 400 trees that creates a contemplative space separate from the usual sights and sounds of a lower Manhattan.

The names of the nearly 3,000 men, women, and children, killed in the attacks of September 11, 2001 and February 26, 1993 are inscribed into bronze panels edging the twin Memorial pools, a powerful reminder of the largest loss of life resulting from a foreign attack on American soil and the greatest single loss of rescue personnel in American history.

In the four years since its dedication, the Memorial has welcomed over 21 million visitors from every state in the U.S. and from more than 175 countries around the world, with 6.1 million people visiting the site in 2014 alone, making the site one of the most visited in the country.

From the millions of tourists who visit every year to the hundreds of dignitaries and heads-of-state that have visited, including Pope Francis who will visit later this month, the 9/11 Memorial has truly become the place where people from all walks of life and where political, religious and cultural leaders from around the world come to pay their respects to the nation.

**The National September 11 Memorial & Museum at the World Trade Center Foundation** was established in 2003 as a private 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization, and began full-fledged operations in 2005. The organization is a true public-private partnership with an esteemed board of directors that includes 11 victims' family members, like Debra here, as well as leaders from both the public and private sector. While located in New York, the Memorial represents those lost at all three attack sites, recognizing these attacks as assaults on our entire nation and—with citizens lost from more than 90 nations—the world.

The project has involved public and private participation at all levels from the start. The plan for rebuilding was itself shaped by the public; thousands participated in open forums and meetings beginning in early 2002 and the open design competition for the Memorial with thousands of entries from around the world.

Funding for the Memorial and Museum includes a mix of public and private contributions, including nearly 600,000 private donations from all 50 states, funding from New York State and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and federal support through the Department of Housing and Urban Development in conjunction with the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation.

To date, the 9/11 Memorial has raised over \$450 million privately, that amounts to nearly 50% of the total funds needed for planning, design, construction, exhibitions, and operations through the opening of the Memorial and the Museum.

The public-private partnership that allowed us to build the Memorial and Museum also included over \$300 million in grant funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development through the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, \$80 million from the State of New York, and \$45M from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

These funds were primarily used for construction -- bricks and mortar, as well as design and planning for the Museum. Current operating funds that allow the Memorial and Museum to be open to the public 365 days a year are raised through private donations, revenue from Museum entrance fees, memberships, retail sales, and special events.

2015 is the first full year of both Memorial and Museum operations, and total operating costs for the Memorial and Museum is budgeted at approximately \$70 million, with nearly a third of that dedicated to maintaining and securing the Memorial Plaza alone. To compare that budget to a similar institution, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum has an annual operating budget

of close to \$90m per year, receives nearly \$50m per year in federal support and gets less than 1/3 of the visitors.

Revenue from Museum entrance fees allows the foundation to keep the 9/11 Memorial free and open to the more than 15,000 visitors we receive every day, 365 days a year, and H.R. 3036 would not only allow us to continue this public-private partnership, but would also allow us to continue to let family members, first responders, rescue and recovery workers and active and retired military access the 9/11 Museum for free as well.

Additionally, while all funds raised during the construction phase went to build the Memorial and Museum, federal support would both cover vital aspects of the overall Memorial operation such as security, which runs in excess of \$12m per year, major events like the annual anniversary ceremony and initiatives to honor our recovery workers and our veterans, and help with maintenance and facilities costs to upkeep a site of this magnitude. It would additionally allow the foundation to build an endowment to ensure this place is here for future generations to learn about the events of September 11, 2001.

**Throughout our nation's history**, Congress has stepped forward to authorize operating funds – in public/private partnership with non-governmental organizations – for memorials and museums of national significance. We believe the 9/11 Memorial is worthy of national recognition and support.

With more than 6m visitors in 2014 alone and more than 21m visitors the past four years, the 9/11 Memorial is already one of the country's most visited and sacred sites, reflecting the profound impact the attacks had on our nation and the world.

Similar to congressional authorizations of the Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Pentagon Memorial and the Kennedy Center, a Federal authorization of funds for the National September 11 Memorial will help advance core national priorities at a site of international importance.

It's hard to believe that children born just after 9/11/01 are now in high school. An entire generation growing up with the events of 9/11 as past history when they were born. The authorization provided by H.R. 3036 would continue the public-private partnership at one of the nation's most important and sacred sites and ensure the history of 9/11 and its implications for our nation and the future continue to be told.

I urge your support for this legislation. Thank you.