

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF THE NEW YORK CITY FIREMEN

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the New York City Firemen, and to submit for the record a brief article written by one of my constituents, Mr. Matthew T. Fitzsimmons. Mr. Fitzsimmons truly captures the selfless nature of the hundreds of firemen that have risked their lives since September 11th, and those that continue to put themselves in harm's way. It is my hope that this article inspires you to realize the true American spirit embodied by "New York's Bravest."

CLIMBING A STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

(By Matthew T. Fitzsimmons)

I have always been proud to be the son of a retired New York City fireman (Marine Co. 9) and brother of a current New York City fireman (Ladder Co. 77). I was born and raised in the tradition and culture of the New York City Fire Department. I am now a lawyer in Cleveland.

Last Tuesday morning at the World Trade Center, New York City firefighters demonstrated to the world, in the most graphic manner imaginable, why they are called New York's Bravest. As tens of thousands evacuated the Twin Towers in mass hysteria, the firefighters, with complete and utter disregard for their own safety, ran into and up the buildings to rescue the injured and others in need of help. It was an extraordinary act of bravery.

Up thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, seventy floors, and higher, with full gear. A height at which you could almost reach out and touch the face of God. Unbeknownst to them, they were climbing a stairway to heaven.

There have been many words used to describe last week's attack on our country: horrific, horrendous, barbaric, tragic, and surreal. For me, there was nothing more horrific, horrendous, barbaric, tragic, surreal—and sickening—than Tuesday's TV graphic that approximately three hundred New York City firefighters were missing, and presumed dead. It is a number that is beyond comprehension—beyond comprehension. It is numbing. Three hundred firefighters—about fifty companies—are significantly more than are on duty in the entire City of Cleveland on any given day.

My thoughts this past week have not been on the faraway lands of Afghanistan, Pakistan, or the Middle East, but on the neighborhoods of Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and the closer in suburbs of Long Island, where families of many firefighters live. The sense of loss and grief in those neighborhoods must be unbearable and unspeakable. I am very sorry for their loss, and mourn with them. To paraphrase Will Rogers' eulogy of President Woodrow Wilson, last Tuesday the world lost three hundred of its greatest friends. Tellingly, it now appears that about ten percent of those who died at the World Trade Center died trying to rescue others.

Firefighters in all cities share many admirable qualities. They are, for the most part, good family men and women. They love kids, and are good with, and make time for, them. They make great Little League coaches, pee-wee football coaches, and CYO basketball coaches—much more so than doctors, lawyers, investment bankers, and the dotcom crowd. Because they face death with the ring of every alarm bell, they appreciate how valuable and precious life is—each life. Above all else, they are extraordinarily brave.

When my father died in 1996, a reporter from one of the New York newspapers asked if he could deliver the eulogy at his funeral Mass. In the early 1970's, this reporter had witnessed my father, then the pilot of the Firefighter (the world's largest and most powerful fireboat), make a rescue in New York Harbor after a freighter and a container cargo ship collided near the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. Scores of people were incinerated in the collision. My father had maneuvered the Firefighter between the two burning ships and rescued about twenty-five crewmen, who were trapped and jumping overboard. The heat was so intense that it melted the paint off the Firefighter's decks. The reporter, a safe distance away on a tugboat, thought the Firefighter was going to catch on fire, explode, and sink. The reporter recounted this rescue in the eulogy, and concluded by saying: "Your father was the bravest man I ever knew." My brothers and sisters and I were very proud to hear this tribute to our father.

In the upcoming days and weeks, there will be funeral Masses and services for all of these fallen heroes. I hope that at these Masses and services someone will tell the children of each one of these deceased firefighters that their father or mother "was the bravest person I ever knew."

Although America can be, at times, a country with a short memory, I am sure that America—indeed the entire world—will never, ever forget the bravery which the men and women of the New York City Fire Department displayed last Tuesday. I am confident that when those firefighters reached the top of that stairway to heaven, Our Lord and St. Peter were likewise in awe of their bravery.

100th ANNIVERSARY OF SS. PETER AND PAUL UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN AUBURN, NY

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 16, 2001

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 100th anniversary of SS. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church in Auburn, NY. The congregation gathered to recognize this important milestone during a Centennial Jubilee celebration on Sunday, September 30, 2001.

It was during the pontificate of Pope St. Pius X that the first Ukrainian Catholic Bishop

was appointed in the United States. An occasion such as the Centennial Jubilee was an appropriate time for the parish to reaffirm their loyalty to the currently reigning Pope Paul VI.

Many Ukrainian Catholic priests served the Parish during the past 100 years as visitors, pastors/administrators, assistant pastors, missionaries, and substitutes. There were also many parochial projects that the pastors directed throughout the years.

This celebration was a time for reflecting on the love and dedication by members of the parish. Gratitude was given to those who devoted time and effort toward the well-being of the parish and also those who used their talents in special fields for the benefit of the parish.

On the occasion of its 100th anniversary, it is my honor to recognize the people of SS. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church and to extend best wishes for many more successful years of faith-based ministry to follow.

PATRIOT ACT OF 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 12, 2001

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I have been proud to serve as a member of the House Judiciary Committee over the past month. In the past, our committee has had a reputation for confrontation—not consensus. But when terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center and assaulted the Pentagon, the Judiciary Committee beat its swords into plowshares.

Under the leadership of JIM SENSENBRENNER and JOHN CONYERS, we came together to produce a bipartisan bill that updates law enforcement's arsenal against terrorism without casting aside our fundamental liberties.

Our efforts produced a balanced bill that received a unanimous vote—a historic accomplishment. I wish it were the Judiciary Committee bill on the floor today.

Unfortunately, today's floor debate has tainted that accomplishment. The short-circuiting of the regular order clouds what should have been a day of unanimity.

Nonetheless, I rise in support of the antiterrorism legislation before us. While the bill is not perfect, it does maintain an acceptable balance between bolstering law enforcement powers and protecting our civil liberties.

In fact, when I read the Senate bill, I see much of the House Judiciary Committee's work reflected in that product.

Since our surveillance laws were first enacted, the terrorists have gotten smarter, faster, and richer. The technology that brings us unprecedented convenience has brought them unprecedented opportunities to wreak havoc. It's time for law enforcement to catch up.

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