Patriot Day: Fact Sheet

Updated September 7, 2023
In 2001, P.L. 107-89 designated September 11 as Patriot Day to honor the individuals who lost their lives as a result of the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001. The law asks the President to issue an annual Proclamation for Patriot Day that directs the U.S. flag to be flown at half-staff and a moment of silence be observed.

The terrorist attacks, which claimed nearly 3,000 lives, involved four civilian airplanes hijacked by 19 members of the Al Qaeda terrorist network. The first two airplanes crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. The third plane struck the Pentagon. The fourth crashed in southwestern Pennsylvania (near Shanksville) after passengers tried to take control of the aircraft.

Patriot Day is not a federal holiday.

In 2009, P.L. 111-13 also designated September 11 as the “National Day of Service and Remembrance.”

This fact sheet is designed to assist congressional offices with work related to Patriot Day observances. It contains links to CRS products, sample speeches and remarks from the Congressional Record, presidential proclamations, and selected historical resources.

Legislation


CRS Reports and Products

CRS Podcast, The Intelligence Community, Terrorism, and 9/11: A Retrospective, Presenters Michael E DeVine and Alan Ott

CRS Report R45969, The September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF), by Scott D. Szymendera

Sample Congressional Speeches and Recognitions

Members of Congress may make floor statements, issue press releases, or enter Extensions of Remarks into the Congressional Record to recognize Patriot Day. The following are some recent examples that may be of assistance in preparing such statements:

Senator Bob Menendez, “Menendez Statement on the 21st Anniversary of September 11th Attacks,” press release, September 11, 2022, Senator Menendez’s website


Presidential Proclamations

Some recent proclamations commemorating Patriot Day from the Compilation of Presidential Documents include the following:

Presidential Proclamations—Joseph R. Biden (2021- )
Presidential Proclamations—Donald J. Trump (2017-2021)

Historical Resources

Resources that provide information on the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks include the following:


The 9/11 Commission Report—The report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, an independent, bipartisan commission created to prepare a complete account of the circumstances surrounding the terrorist attacks.

Bearing Witness to History—Descriptions of objects in the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History collection that document and preserve the material record of the attacks. The objects include scanned images of newspaper and magazine covers reporting on the events. The site also includes stories of the curators who collect and maintain the objects.

September 11 Digital Archive—The archive uses electronic media to collect, preserve, and present September 11, 2001’s history, and its aftermath. It includes Frequently Asked Questions.

Memorials

9/11 Memorial & Museum
The National 9/11 Pentagon Memorial
Flight 93 National Memorial
9/11 Memorials by State and 9/11 Memorials by Country (maintained by VOICES of September 11). (CRS has not determined whether this list is comprehensive.)

Author Information

Audrey Celeste Crane-Hirsch
Reference Librarian

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