



September 11, 2006

Dear Friends:

As our nation pauses to reflect on the five year anniversary of the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks, we remember the lives lost, the grieving families and the unity of purpose our nation shared in the weeks following the tragedy. As one nation, we honor the victims and their families, and vow to ensure real security to keep our citizens safe and protected in the future.

Five years after September 11th there remains vital work to do to protect the American people. Hurricane Katrina tragically demonstrated our nation's lack of preparedness in dealing with a disaster. Unfortunately, Congress and the White House have too often made a political game of our of security decisions which has divided our nation and made us less safe.

The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (also known as the 9/11 Commission), an independent, bipartisan commission was created by congressional legislation and the signature of President George W. Bush in late 2002. The 9/11 Commission made 41 critical recommendations, universally respected as an effective prescription to protect America from terrorism. Yet, five years after 9/11 these recommendations have not yet been fully implemented by Congress.

The chairman and vice-chairman of the 9/11 Commission, Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton, reflected upon these recommendations in today's Boston Globe saying, "**We issued a report card on our recommendations in December. It included 10 C's, 12 D's, and four F's. What we argued then is still true now: Americans are safer, but we are not yet safe.**"

Five years after the 9/11 attacks, our nation still lacks a comprehensive border security strategy. Programs designed to ensure that every mile of our borders is monitored have not been managed effectively, and statutory requirements to add thousands of new Border Patrol agents annually have not been met.

The 9/11 Act of 2004 called for 2,000 new Border Patrol Agents in 2006; and yet the President's budget for 2006 provided funding for only 210 new agents – 1,790 agents short. Throughout 2005, my Democratic colleagues and I fought for the funding for the promised 2,000 new agents. On three separate occasions in 2005, House Republicans voted against our efforts to provide full funding for the 2,000 new Border Patrol Agents that Congress had earlier promised.

As we look to the future, we must learn the lessons of the past and act, not out of fear, but to enhance the security of our citizens and to protect our freedoms. Congress has a duty, a solemn obligation, to the American people and the memory of the nearly 3,000 men and women who lost their lives on

September 11th to keep America strong, protected and free. It is time for Congress to make all 41 recommendations of the 9/11 Commission the law.



A flag near the U.S. Capitol flying at half-staff in honor of the Fifth Anniversary of the September 11th Attacks

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Betty". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Serving Minnesota's Fourth Congressional District

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