

August 14, 2026

OPEN LETTER TO GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL

From Retired Port Authority Police Officers

Governor Hochul:

We write as retired Police Officers of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey—men and women who devoted our careers to protecting the World Trade Center. We responded to both terrorist attacks, February 26, 1993, and September 11, 2001. On 9/11, 37 Port Authority Police Officers were murdered, along with 47 civilian members of the Port Authority family. Many first responders and survivors continue to suffer the physical and emotional consequences of Ground Zero.

The World Trade Center was our workplace, our responsibility, and our home. It remains sacred ground to those who served there and to the families of those who never came home.

We were therefore deeply troubled by your decision to illuminate One World Trade Center for Muslim American Heritage Month. While we respect your authority to issue such a proclamation, our objection is to your decision to use the WTC and Ground Zero—inseparably connected to both terrorist attacks—for this purpose when countless other locations were available.

Our objection is to the ideology of radical Islamist terrorism that inspired both WTC attacks and the lack of sensitivity we believe you demonstrated by choosing the WTC and Ground Zero for this observance. We believe that political pandering played a role in a decision that showed such disregard for the significance of this sacred site and for the countless people whose lives were forever changed by the attacks.

Your decision was, in our view, insensitive, tone-deaf, and an affront to those of us who served there, the families of the fallen, survivors, and our fellow first responders. Because of that decision, we believe that you have forfeited your right to stand alongside us at Ground Zero on the 25th anniversary.

We therefore respectfully but unequivocally demand that you do not attend this year's 9/11 commemoration at Ground Zero. This anniversary belongs to the victims, their families, survivors, and first responders—not politics or controversy.

We were there. We remember. We Will NEVER FORGET!

John McDevitt

President - Port Authority Retired Police Association