

August 14, 2026

Office of the Mayor
City Hall
New York, New York 10007

Re: 25th Anniversary of the September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attacks - Ground Zero

Mayor Mamdani:

We write as retired Police Officers of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to respectfully but unequivocally demand that you not attend the 25th anniversary memorial ceremony at Ground Zero on September 11, 2026.

For us, September 11 is not a political occasion, a photo opportunity, or a platform for public officials. It is a solemn day of remembrance for those who were murdered, those who responded, those who survived, and the families who have carried these losses for twenty-five years.

The World Trade Center was our home.

The Port Authority owned, operated, and maintained its headquarters at the World Trade Center. Our police officers patrolled and protected it each day, standing ready to safeguard the people who worked there and the millions who passed through its doors. The terrorist bombing of February 26, 1993, and the attacks of September 11, 2001, were therefore deeply personal attacks on the entire Port Authority family.

Many of our members, both active and retired, were working at the World Trade Center or responded to the attacks in 1993 and 2001. Retired PAPD officers also showed up at Ground Zero to work beside active officers and other first responders, putting their own health and lives at risk despite having no obligation to do so. On September 11, 2001, thirty-seven Port Authority police officers were murdered, along with forty-seven other members of our Port Authority family. These were not statistics. They were our brothers, sisters, friends, and colleagues - people beside whom many of us had stood only hours earlier.

Since that day, additional Port Authority police officers and employees have died from illnesses associated with their exposure to the toxic conditions at Ground Zero. Others continue to live with serious physical and emotional consequences. Their families have grown older without spouses, parents, children, siblings, and friends. Survivors continue to carry memories that can never be erased.

For these reasons, we strongly object to YOUR attendance at this year's ceremony. We have profound concerns about your public statements, political associations, and positions that, in our view, are inconsistent with the sacrifice of the victims and the law-enforcement officers who died while protecting others. We are particularly troubled by rhetoric or affiliations perceived as hostile to law enforcement or sympathetic to individuals and movements antagonistic toward the United States and the men and women who protect it.

Whether or not you agree with our assessment, the central point remains: this day belongs to the victims, their families, the survivors, and the first responders.

We respect the office of the Mayor of the City of New York. However, holding public office does not create an entitlement to participate personally in every sacred remembrance. There is an important difference between possessing the authority to attend and having the support of those whose loved ones are being memorialized.

We believe your presence at Ground Zero on this 25th anniversary would cause deep pain to many members of the 9/11 community, including retired Port Authority police officers who personally experienced these attacks. It also risks shifting attention away from the people whose lives, courage, and sacrifice the ceremony exists to honor.

The Port Authority Police Department suffered the largest loss of police officers in a single incident in the history of American policing. Our members did not retreat from danger. They entered burning and collapsing buildings to rescue people they often did not know, fully aware that they might not return. Thirty-seven of our brothers and sisters made the ultimate sacrifice. Their memorial should not become the center of political controversy.

The same is true for every firefighter, police officer, emergency medical worker, Port Authority employee, civilian, member of the military, and emergency responder whose life was forever changed by September 11.

We therefore ask you to demonstrate respect by refraining from attending the ceremony. If you wish to offer condolences to the victims' families or recognize the sacrifice of the first responders, you may do so through a written statement, public message, or separate event that does not intrude upon the solemn observance at Ground Zero.

Please allow the families to grieve, the survivors to remember, the first responders to honor their fallen, and the Port Authority family to remember our brothers and sisters. Above all, please allow the 9/11 community to observe this day with the peace and dignity it deserves.

For twenty-five years, we have carried these memories, honored the dead, and lived with the consequences of that day. We will continue to stand for those who made the ultimate sacrifice and to speak when we believe their memory, or the dignity of their families, is being compromised.

Accordingly, we respectfully reiterate our request: we demand that you do not attend the 25th Anniversary memorial ceremony at Ground Zero on September 11, 2026.

This is our day to remember. Please allow us to remember in peace.

Respectfully,

John McDevitt

President
Port Authority Retired Police Association

NEVER FORGET