

## Congressman Wally Herger

### *"Honoring Our First Responders"* (September 11, 2006)

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Five years after September 11, 2001, Americans pause to remember the deadliest attack on American soil in our nation's history. The innocent victims of this horrific terrorist attack expected nothing more than a routine workday or flight that day. By mid-morning, nearly 3,000 lives were lost and our nation was at war.

This terrible day reminded Americans of the incredible work done by our nation's "first responders," the police officers, sheriffs, fire fighters, paramedics, and others - paid and volunteer - who risk their lives for the safety of other Americans.

Even as the World Trade Center was burning and approached collapse, firefighters and police officers entered the buildings to rescue those trapped inside. Nearly four hundred of these first responders did not make it out alive. These fallen firefighters and police officers gave their lives to save thousands others.

The heroism of our nation's first responders certainly didn't begin or stop on that horrific day. Thousands of other firefighters and police officers perished in the line of duty before that day; and over one thousand have died in the line of duty since. Whether they are rescuing individuals from burning homes, confronting crime in challenging neighborhoods, or responding to wildfires, these men and women place their lives on the line everyday. They are truly on the "front lines" in our efforts to prevent and respond to another potential terrorist attack here at home. We thank them for their service and honor their sacrifice.

Similarly, our men and women in uniform, intelligence officers, and Homeland Security personnel are aggressively fighting the War on Terror. The September 11 anniversary gives us occasion to pause and reflect on their--and their families'--sacrifices. Our grateful nation thanks them for their courage, skill, and resolve in protecting America. They are demonstrating the same courage and self-sacrifice that the NYPD and FDNY showed five years ago.

Our first responders and military personnel have the common mission of protecting Americans. September 11, 2001, proved that they perform their mission with a spirit and resolve that no terrorist attack can destroy.