

Opening Statement of Senator Jerry Moran of Kansas

Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs – Ten Years after 9/11: Are We Safer?

September 13, 2011

Chairman Lieberman and Ranking Member Collins, thank you for holding this hearing today. Mr. Chairman, our government's primary responsibility is the protection of its citizens. No one will ever forget that September morning 10 years ago when they heard the news that America was under attack. In a matter of minutes, lives were forever changed as fire fighters rushed to answer the cries for help, citizens risked their lives to save others, and final phone calls were made to loved ones. As President Bush said this weekend at the National Memorial dedication for Flight 93 in Pennsylvania, that day taught us that "evil is real, and so is courage."

After the attacks on September 11th, I traveled to New York to witness the destruction at Ground Zero firsthand. Around the smoldering pile of rubble was a makeshift memorial where flowers, photos, and prayers in tribute to the fallen had been left. One note caught my eye; it was penned on spiral notebook paper. It read: "Dear Daddy – How much I miss you. I hope heaven is a wonderful place. I hope I live a life good enough to join you there someday – Amanda, age 12." One of my own daughters was 12 at the time, so Amanda's words left a lasting impression on me. At that moment, I resolved to work toward the day when there would never again be notes left behind by children like Amanda.

Today we are closer to achieving that goal, but there is still work to be done. Secretary Napolitano, Director Mueller, and Director Olsen, I look forward to hearing your testimony on the progress we've made and the work ahead to ensure we live up to our most important responsibility. It is our duty to preserve this nation for the next generation – so they too can pursue the American dream. Thank you Mr. Chairman.