

February 16, 2012

The Honorable Tom Coburn
United States Senator
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Coburn:

We write regarding the National September 11th Memorial and Museum Act of 2011, legislation we are supporting, to provide federal assistance to the 9/11 Memorial and Museum located in lower Manhattan. We understand and appreciate the concerns you expressed regarding how this legislation is paid for. But in the spirit of the extraordinary patriotic unity that followed the attack on our nation on 9/11, we ask that you join us in finding a way to pass this bill to ensure that the memorial at the site of the former World Trade Center receives the federal aid it deserves. As a good faith effort to identify mutually agreed upon revenue streams to support the legislation, we are proposing that we utilize revenue from tariffs on imported American flags as one potential funding source.

As an Oklahoman, we know you understand all too well the horrors of terrorism. Just as you suffered with all Americans when our nation was attacked on September 11, 2001, we shared in your mourning on that tragic day in 1995 when the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City was attacked by murderous extremists. As a nation, we cannot forget the lives that were lost in 2001 and 1995, and must find ways to educate future generations about these events. That is why we are strong supporters of the 9/11 Memorial and Museum and its mission to both memorialize those we lost and also educate people from the world over about the events of that day.

We understand that you have concerns about authorizing federal funding to aid the 9/11 Memorial and Museum. After working with you to successfully pass the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, legislation which will provide medical assistance to those responders and rescue workers who suffered harm as a result of the after-effects of the attacks on 9/11, we are convinced that we can find a compromise that will satisfy all of your concerns, while still allowing the Memorial and Museum to receive much-needed and deserved federal aid. We are prepared to work with you to identify revenues to offset the cost of this bill, and suggest that one possibility would be to utilize money from tariffs on imported American flags as a possible source of revenue.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with you and our Senate colleagues to forge a mutual agreement that will enable us to pass the National September 11th Memorial and Museum Act of 2011.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Schumer
U.S. Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand
U.S. Senator