

Reflections on the 20th Anniversary of the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks



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President Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush at the 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York giving honor to those who lost their lives. [Source: www.instagram.com/barackobama/]

(VILLAGER) - On September 11, 2021, twenty years after the 9/11 attack on America, we stopped to remember the horrific attack on US soil, those who lost their lives, individuals left disabled, families broken apart forever, and all emergency responders who died trying to save others.

I was in Boston on a business trip for my company at the time, not realizing that I had been staying only walking distance from the World Trade Center Bombers. Boston immediately became a crime scene and all major forms of transportation were halted.

I overheard a gentleman who somehow found a van rental talking in the hotel lobby mention Texas, I ran over and asked if I could ride along. He said "we're leaving in 10 minutes," and another woman heard that conversation. She ran over and said "I'm going to Dallas but can I ride with you to Houston? The gentleman agreed, we grabbed a bell captain and were in the van in less than 10 minutes! Together two mothers and four dads hit the road amidst total chaos.

We were all strangers to each other, stranded in Boston and were all trying to get home. Each rider

identified the area of the country they knew best. The first driver knew the Northeast but he made a mistake and took us directly towards Manhattan, the one place I said that I did not want to see. The van went silent and no one said a word until we were out of the state of New York...we saw the World Trade Center *still* burning. There were clouds of smoke and we were able to smell the smoke. Tears fell down the cheeks of 6 adults, uncontrollable tears. In that moment those smells became etched in my memory for the rest of my life.

My CEO at the Lower Colorado River Authority went to our Board Room in Austin with a map. He wrote the names of all employees on travel and said, "I won't rest until they're all home!" My Pastor, Dr. B.W. McClendon called me every step of the way on my journey back to Texas for a status. My husband was scheduled to fly out the morning of 9/11, but of course all flights were cancelled before his departure. Our daughter was four years old and enrolled in Pre-K at St. Martins Lutheran Church.

After arriving in Houston, I was able to rent a car and drive to Austin. Once crossing the city lim-

its, I pulled over on Highway 71, kissed the ground and thanked God for my return.

Like me, the world will never forget 9/11!

This past weekend, President Biden on Twitter remarked, "20 years after September 11, 2001, we commemorate the 2,977 lives we lost and honor those who risked and gave their lives. As we saw in the days that followed, unity is our greatest strength. It's what makes us who we are — and we can't forget that."

Others joined in reflection, including President Barack Obama and President George W. Bush, the latter of whom was the President during the attack. President Obama said, "today we honor the nearly 3,000 men, women, and children who died on September 11, 2001, and even more who lost their lives in service to our country in the two decades since. We reaffirm our commitment to keep a sacred trust with their families — including the children who lost parents, and who have demonstrated such extraordinary resilience. But this anniversary is also about reflecting on what we've learned in the 20 years since that awful morning."

We as a nation will never forget.



(Austin, TX) - The Texas Freedom Network and its program for young Texans, Texas Rising Action, today announced their opposition to Austin Proposition A, a ballot measure that would force the City of Austin to cut funding to firefighters, paramedics, pools, libraries, and more in favor of hiring

an arbitrary number of hundreds of additional police officers.

"All Austinites can agree that our city's services and departments should be properly funded," Texas Freedom Network President Val Benavidez said. "Unfortunately, this irresponsible ballot measure is a recipe for disaster that

will accomplish the opposite. It requires a level of funding and staffing for the police department determined not by the realities on the ground in one of the safest large cities in America but by the political activists, with political motivations, behind this proposal.

"The funding for all of these additional police officers will have to come from somewhere,

and it will come at the expense of our libraries, parks, pools, paramedics, firefighters and more. We urge Austinites to vote 'No' this November."

Prop. A would require the city to immediately hire almost 700 new police officers and several hundred more in the next five years, and all with no additional funding. Not even the interim police chief agrees with what he called the "random number" of police officers re-

quired under Prop. A.

"Young people have helped make Austin the thriving city that it is," Texas Rising Action Senior Director Rae Martinez said. "Austin has excellent colleges and universities, and it continues to be a top destination for young professionals in all sorts of fields from around the world. The reality is that people still want to come here. Let's make sure that when they do, they find a city with a

properly maintained park down the street, a welcoming library in which to learn something new and important first-responder services beyond just police. We call on young people, and all Austinites, to send the message that we care about all aspects of living in this great city by rejecting Prop. A."

Prop. A will be before voters on Nov. 2. Early voting begins Oct. 18.

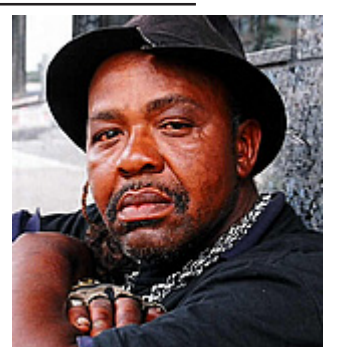
Texas Freedom Network, Texas Rising Action Announce Opposition to Austin Prop. A

Central Texas Interfaith Statement on Travis County use of \$110 million in stimulus funds to address homelessness

(Travis County) - Over the past several months Central Texas Interfaith has been calling on Travis County Commissioners Court to invest at least \$100 million from federal stimulus funds to address the issue of homelessness. We commend Commissioners Ann Howard and Margaret Gómez for sponsoring a plan to invest \$110 million in an array of projects to address homelessness and urge Commissioners and the County Judge to vote in favor of this measure at today's meeting of the

Court. CTI clergy and leaders believe preventing and eliminating homeless to be our most pressing immediate issue as a region. We also recognize Judge Brown for publicly supporting at least \$100 Million from the county to address homelessness earlier this year.

CTI has also called on the City of Austin to release the \$84 million in stimulus dollars held up in a contingency fund to address homelessness. This potential investment by Travis County should also send a clear signal to the



Homelessness in WDC series [Elvert Xavier Barnes Photography]

City of Austin about the county's commitment in leading the fight against homelessness with a clear plan. CTI believes the city should immediately release the remaining \$84 million in its contingency fund toward similar ends.

Do you feel people of all races share equal access to safe and comfortable places to walk, bike, and roll?

Share your thoughts to questions like these at atxwbr.link/survey
Take our survey now through Sept. 26.

atx Walk Bike Roll
Urban Trails | Sidewalks | Bikeway Plans