



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## Move 9/11 Terror Trials

JAMES L. SEWARD February 11, 2010

| ISSUE: **MILITARY AFFAIRS, HOMELAND SECURITY**



Every American remembers certain moments in our nation's history. They remember where they were, they remember whom they were with. These are the moments that define our country; exciting events like the Apollo moon landing, tragic occurrences like the assassination of President Kennedy and in our more recent history, the 9/11 terror attacks.

Americans are still reeling from the attacks on September 11th, 2001. Here in New York the pain is even greater. Many know someone who passed away when the World Trade Center

towers came crashing down and now those who live and work in New York City may be forced to relive the tragedy.

Since the founding of our nation, the United States has recognized that enemy combatant terrorists need to be tried by military tribunals. From the time of George Washington to present day, the United States has recognized that terrorists, captured with the intent to attack our nation, should not be afforded the same constitutional criminal justice protection reserved for U.S. citizens. But the Obama Administration sees things differently and has decided to put the accused 9/11 conspirators on trial in a civilian court in New York City.

The trial plan has been denounced across the political spectrum as a horrendous notion. Not one stakeholder in New York City or across the state is supportive of the proposal.

There are multiple arguments against holding the terror trials in a civilian court in New York City. First and foremost, the proposed location of the trial, in the very shadow of where the World Trade Center once stood, and in the heart of New York City's financial and commercial district, poses unacceptable and significant risks, harm and threat to the safety and security of millions of Americans and New Yorkers.

Along with the considerable risk comes the substantial cost. Businesses located near the federal district courthouse in Manhattan would no doubt have to deal with a sizeable economic loss. Officials have also estimated the security costs could reach nearly \$1 billion, an unprecedented sum. With New York in the midst of a deep economic recession and state fiscal crisis we simply cannot afford that type of expense.

Furthermore, holding the terror trials in open civilian court and permitting the terrorists to enjoy the same constitutional criminal justice protections reserved for U.S. citizens will place a great risk on our nation's intelligence information, offer a platform for the accused and

encourage fellow terrorists to commit further acts of war and violence against our nation. All are extremely unfavorable consequences.

For all of these reasons, I joined recently with my senate colleagues in sponsoring a legislative resolution urging U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and President Obama to reverse their decision to hold the terror trials here in New York. The resolution received overwhelming support. Lawmakers from every corner of the state signed on as sponsors and many passionate, heartfelt speeches were made on the senate floor decrying the plan to bring the terrorists to Manhattan.

Allowing avowed terrorists on our public streets is unconscionable and a plan which must be stopped. Enemy military combatants should be prosecuted on a secure military base where the public cannot be harmed.

The people of New York suffered one of the greatest tragedies in our nation's history on September 11th. The idea that these trials would be held just blocks from where the tragedy occurred is an outrage, and shows a callous and blatant disregard for the people of New York. I invite all of you to sign my [on-line petition](#) calling for the relocation of the trials. Together, we can send a loud and clear message to the Obama Administration that the terror trials need to be moved, and they need to be moved now.