



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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What would we do?

THOMAS F. O'MARA April 24, 2013



It's a thought that comes to mind every time there's another natural disaster, another emergency, another act of terror like what we saw last week in Boston and in Texas: What would we do without our first responders?

Always among the most powerful images from these terrible events are the photos of firefighters carrying the wounded to safety, first responders rushing toward – not away from – danger, police officers instinctively shielding everyone else from harm.

We saw these images yet again last week in the aftermaths of the Boston Marathon bombings and the fertilizer plant explosion in central Texas. They are images of heroism and they leave us wondering: Where would we turn without these heroes in these times of need?

And so terrible events like these are times, also, to reassess our response strategies, reevaluate our emergency services, and reflect on how we can and must do better.

So this week, at a time when Americans everywhere will observe National Volunteer Week, I'd like to take a moment to do just that -- and to do it in a way that focuses on the place that our emergency first responders hold in our communities and throughout our society.

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