

HB1103
(FAV)
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Good afternoon, and thank you for allowing us to come before you today to share our mission of having the **Freedom Flag adopted as the official flag of remembrance here in Maryland.**

My name is **Chuck Ritz**, founder of the **Hope and Peace Foundation**. Our mission closely reflects that of the Freedom Flag Foundation: **to preserve our past, educate our future, and ensure that we never forget September 11th.**

Following the terrorist attacks nearly 25 years ago on 9/11, it was confirmed that **69 Marylanders were killed that horrific day**. Through continued research and outreach, we have since confirmed that **an additional 16 victims were either born in Maryland, raised here, or lived here at the time of their deaths**, bringing the total number of Marylanders lost on September 11th to **85**.

By recognizing these additional lives lost, we demonstrate that **Maryland has not forgotten those who perished during the worst foreign attack on American soil.**

By partnering with the **Freedom Flag Foundation** and the **State of Maryland** to make the Freedom Flag our official flag of remembrance, we reaffirm a promise.

We make promises every day. Some are broken, and some are never fully carried through. But the promise we made as a nation to **Never Forget 9/11** must be one we keep—by those of us who witnessed that day and by the generations who will follow us.

Today, as our nation faces new global conflicts, the Freedom Flag not only honors those lost on September 11th, but also remembers those who served during the **20-year war against terrorism**. It honors the **177 Maryland sons and daughters** who paid the ultimate price for justice and for our freedom.

Their sacrifice is forever represented in this **flag of remembrance**.

In closing, I would like to thank you again for allowing us to be here today. As the rallying cry of **Flight 93 hero Todd Beamer** still echoes in our hearts and in our souls, perhaps it is time for Maryland to answer that call and say:

“Let’s Roll.”

By adopting the **Freedom Flag as Maryland’s official flag of remembrance for 9/11.**

Thank you.

