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## **National Safety Campaign Mobilizes Female Legislators, First Spouses**

*Elected Officials Commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 9/11 by Promoting Drills Teaching Americans to **Be Prepared, Not Scared**<sup>™</sup>*

**Atlanta** – The [Safe America Foundation](#), the [National Foundation for Women Legislators](#) (NFWL), Puerto Rico First Lady Lucé Vela de Fortuño and Former West Virginia First Lady Gayle Manchin are joining forces to encourage over one million Americans to practice emergency readiness exercises this September and October.

In commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of 9/11, this effort is part of the Safe America Foundation's **March to 1 Million** national safety campaign. The goal of this initiative is to encourage every American to think about how they would cope with a natural or man caused emergency.

“Working in conjunction with the Emergency Managers in all 50 states and Puerto Rico, we want to leverage the relationships these elected women and First Spouses have in their communities to get local School Superintendents, PTA Chapters and small business people ‘involved’ in drilling each September. It is a fitting legacy to those who died on 9/11 – and it can help prevent a catastrophe from becoming more horrific,” said NFWL President & CEO Robin Read.

At the [NFWL's annual conference](#) in Des Moines, Iowa this August 11-15, Safe America will teach elected women from across the nation how to lead preparedness drills in their communities and states. Of particular focus will be the role text messaging can play in communicating with loved ones during a disaster. Participants will also have the opportunity to hear how ‘Town Hall Meetings’ can be utilized to promote a new text ‘safety shorthand’ – 7865 “RUOK”/4665 “IMOK” and be filmed for TV spots that will be distributed to NBC, Telemundo and other local broadcast media.

Thanks to the efforts of Manchin and Vela de Fortuño, Puerto Rico is in the planning stage of a preparedness texting drill this fall. In addition, major sponsors including Motorola, Alcatel-Lucent and UPS are being invited to involve their collective employees.

“We cannot wait for another major emergency – we need to do this now,” said Gayle Manchin. “All elected officials are responsible for the creation of effective emergency plans for communities and districts. It is also critical to practice these plans so that everyone is prepared when disaster strikes,” added Lucé Vela de Fortuño.

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“We want to enlist their voices – and hearts – in helping Americans be ‘prepared’ to handle the kinds of emergencies we all expect – tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and even man-made incidents of mass destruction” said Safe America President and CEO Len Pagano.

### **March to 1 Million**

Begun in 2009 under the banner *Drill Down for Safety*, the Safe America Foundation’s preparedness programming has to-date mobilized over 1.2 million Americans to participate in preparedness exercises. In 2010 alone, 800,000 people in over 40 states conducted emergency drills during the month of September.

This initiative is the Foundation’s most expansive yet and will include a national ‘safety umbrella tour’ that is being co-sponsored by a coalition of over 30 national non-profits and other organizations.

### **About the Safe America Foundation**

Safe America Foundation, a 501c-3 non-profit, headquartered in suburban Atlanta, created the “March to 1 Million” program as a centerpiece of a multi-year national mobilization campaign. Its goal is to use the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 9/11 to encourage people to learn what they should do after an emergency – and what can be done in advance to rehearse re-connecting with family members.

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