



Darkest Day Survived

February 4, 2025

On September 11, 2001, the nominee for secretary of commerce, Howard Lutnick, took his son Kyle to his first day of kindergarten; which, [he told the Senate](#), “is why I am with you today.”

The detour made him late for work at the company of which he is CEO, Cantor Fitzgerald, a leading financial service firm then located on top floors of the World Trade Center.

His brother Gary “and 657 of my other friends and colleagues at Cantor Fitzgerald” lost their lives that day.

Lutnick asked the surviving employees, about a

thousand people, to help him rebuild the company and help the 658 families who had lost a loved one. Over the next five years, they all donated 25 percent of their salaries to those families, about \$180 million. These acts of generosity “stitched my soul back together,” he said.

“My employees never expected to get paid back, but I had other ideas. In 2008, we took a division of our company public and each employee received double what they had given.”

Lutnick does seem like “just a good dude,” as J.D. Vance describes him.

I don’t know whether he will do a good job as Secretary of Commerce. Leading a major government agency isn’t the same as leading a major business. I guess part of the answer depends on whether we, like Lutnick, support President Trump’s trade policies.

I do suspect he’ll be a better head of that department than [the last one](#).

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.