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**U.S. SENATE AND HOUSE LAWMAKERS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY  INTRODUCE CRITICAL REAUTHORIZATION OF JAMES ZADROGA 9/11 HEALTH AND COMPENSATION ACT**

***Health and Compensation Programs Passed Into Law After Almost Decade Long Fight Set to Expire Next Year – Participants in 9/11 Health Program Living in All 50 States and 429 of 435 Congressional Districts***

***Lawmakers: ‘We Have a Moral Obligation to Continue to Provide the Care and Compensation That Our 9/11 Heroes, Survivors and Their Families Need and Deserve’***

*Washington, D.C.* – Nearly a week after the 13th Anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, a bipartisan group of lawmakers from across the country has introduced the*James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act*.. U.S. Senators Kirsten Gillibrand, Charles Schumer, Robert Menendez, Cory Booker, Richard Blumenthal, Chris Murphy, Elizabeth Warren, Jeanne Shaheen and Jeff Merkley introduced the legislation in the Senate. Representatives Carolyn Maloney, Jerrold Nadler and Peter King introduced the bipartisan House bill with 37 additional co-sponsors. House co-sponsors include: Representatives Carolyn Maloney, Jerrold Nadler, Peter King, Daniel Maffei, Michael Fitzpatrick, Charles Rangel, Michael Grimm,  Nita Lowey, Gregory Meeks, William Owens, Carolyn McCarthy, Joseph Crowley, Jose Serrano, Sean Patrick Maloney, Steve Israel, Nydia Velázquez, Brian Higgins, Eliot Engel, Grace Meng, Chris Gibson, Timothy Bishop, Paul Tonko, Frank Pallone, Bill Pascrell Jr, Richard Neal, Rosa DeLauro, Rush Holt, Jim Himes, Gerald Connolly, Raul Grijalva, Sheila Jackson Lee, Albio Sires, Allyson Schwartz, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Carol Shea-Porter, John Larson, Joe Courtney, Stephen Lynch, Zoe Lofgren, and James McGovern.

The Zadroga bill’s two critical programs providing medical treatment and compensation for 9/11 heroes – the World Trade Center Health Program and the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund – are set to expire in October 2015 and October 2016 respectively. The bill introduced today would continue these programs for 25 more years, through 2041. Last week, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio joined the lawmakers along with 9/11 first responders, community survivors and union leaders to begin the push to reauthorize the critically needed programs originally passed in December 2010.

Now 13 years after September 11th, 9/11 responders and survivors are still battling serious health crises resulting from exposure to the toxins at Ground Zero. More than 30,000 9/11 responders and survivors have an illness or injury caused by the attacks or their aftermath, and over two-thirds of those have more than one illness. Many are disabled and can no longer work. They are suffering from a host of chronic diseases: asthma, obstructive pulmonary disease and gastroesophageal reflux disease, and many more.

Medical research has identified more than 60 types of cancer caused by 9/11 toxins. More than 2,900 people have been diagnosed with cancers caused or made worse by the aftermath of the attacks - more than 800 New York Fire Department members and more than 550 New York Police Department personnel are struggling with serious 9/11-related illnesses, not including the more than 70 firefighters and 60 NYPD officers who have died from their 9/11-related illnesses.

Responders came from all over the country to aid in the response to the attacks. And some area residents, workers and survivors have since moved and are currently receiving care in cities and states across the country. Participants enrolled in the World Trade Center Health Program for treatment currently reside in all 50 states and in 429 of the 435 Congressional districts in the country.

“Our 9/11 heroes, survivors, and my colleagues fought hard to ensure that Congress fulfilled its undeniable moral obligation by providing long-overdue health care and compensation for 9/11 responders and community survivors,” said **Senator Gillibrand**. “So just as our first responders and survivors worked hard to pass the 9/11 health bill in 2010, tirelessly walking the halls of Congress week after week, month after month, and year after year, we will do everything in our power to get this new legislation passed and signed into. But it shouldn’t have to take another ‘Christmas Miracle’ for Congress to do the right thing. It should simply take listening to these heroes and reflecting on 9/11 and about who we are as a nation.”

“The 13th Anniversary of 9/11 was just last week, and as we remember the thousands of Americans lost on that tragic day, we also have a duty in Congress to remember and care for those first-responders that heroically rushed towards the site and prevented even more significant loss of life," said **Senator Schumer**. "Those selfless first responders now need our help, as they suffer from illnesses caused by the airborne toxins at the World Trade Center: it would simply be an abomination to leave them behind. The legislation that we are introducing today will extend critically needed medical treatment and compensation programs for another 25 years for these men and women, and it must be a top priority for all members of Congress that this pass as soon as possible.”

“Our first responders didn’t hesitate to answer the call 13 years ago and we shouldn’t turn our backs on them now,” said **Senator Menendez**.   “We owe it to these heroic men and women who risked their lives and sacrificed their long term personal health to save so many from the terror attacks at the World Trade Center.  We have a moral obligation to provide 9/11 survivors access to compensation programs and critically needed medical treatment.”

“Thirteen years after the unconscionable tragedy at Ground Zero, survivors and first responders are still suffering the physical and emotional damage caused by that life-altering moment in our nation’s history,” **Senator Booker** said. “I am proud to join members in both houses of Congress to honor the memory and sacrifices made that day by preserving the health and well-being of the men and women who are still recovering.”

“Thirteen years after the horrific September 11 attacks, far too many survivors and brave first responders who rushed to the site are today fighting cancer and struggling with chronic illnesses brought on by the toxins they breathed that day and in the weeks afterwards,” said **Senator Blumenthal**. “As we are reminded today never to forget that day and those lost, we must never forget our obligation to the heroes of that day.”

"As we remember those who lost their lives in the attacks of 9/11, we also need to remember and honor the first responders and survivors who, tragically, continue to experience serious health issues that can be traced back to that day”, said **Senator Murphy**. “Reauthorizing this legislation needs to be a top priority in Congress. We can’t turn our backs on these innocent men and women, or let this bill turn into a game of chicken as it did last time around. Congress should act quickly to provide 9/11 first responders and survivors with the support they need.”

“Our first responders risk their health and safety every day to protect us, and we owe it to those who served us on September 11th to make sure they receive the care they need,” said **Senator Warren**. “The Zadroga Act’s health and compensation programs are a critical part of how we honor our courageous first responders and help ease the effects of illnesses and injuries that were suffered that day. Extending that support is something we can all agree on.”

“The events of 9/11 not only changed our nation forever but they also dramatically impaired the health and well-being for many of the first responders and community survivors,” **Senator Shaheen** said. “There should be no question that we need to look after the 9/11 first responders who were so heroically selfless and whose health is bearing the great burden of that day. I hope in reflecting on 9/11, we can come together to extend these critical programs so that survivors and their families can get the care they need and deserve.”

“In the aftermath of 9/11 we said that we would never forget – not someday forget or eventually forget, but never forget,” said **Congresswoman Maloney**. “That vow comes with an obligation on the part of Congress to ensure that we as a country remember, honor and care for those who are now sick or may still become sick due to their exposure to toxins at ground zero. The unbearable sorrow of the attacks is forever seared in our collective memory. We have a moral obligation to assist those who still carry the wounds of that day. We must extend the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act.”

“Just as we stood together as a nation in the days following September 11, 2001, and just as we stood strong together in 2010 to create these vital programs, we must join forces again to ensure that the first responders and survivors of 9/11 are not abandoned when they need us most,” said **Congressman Nadler**.

“To this day too many of our 9/11 responders and survivors continue to fight serious illnesses, includes 60 types of cancer caused by 9/11 toxins,” said **Congressman King**. “This reauthorization is critical for these individuals and their families. We have come too far and we must continue to ensure that our 9/11 heroes receive the care they deserve.”

“No group deserves our gratitude and help more than those who went to Ground Zero in the days and weeks following the September 11 attacks.  We have a moral obligation to make sure that these heroes and their families get the medical treatment and compensation they deserve,” said **New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “These police officers, firefighters, medical professionals and other first responders came from across the country to Ground Zero, and as the Mayor of New York City, I am proud to advocate for this critical piece of legislation that will provide care to those heroes in their own communities right here in New York but also in cities across the country.”

The *James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act* passed by Congress in 2010 helped ensure proper monitoring and treatment for thousands of men, women and children that face potential life-threatening health effects due to the toxins released at Ground Zero in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

Currently, over 30,000 responders and survivors across the nation are sick and receiving critical treatment and medical care through the World Trade Center (WTC) Health Program.  Over 60,000 9/11 responders are receiving medical monitoring. The program treats responders and survivors for many chronic diseases and respiratory illnesses, including asthma, obstructive pulmonary disease, and gastroesophageal reflux disease.

The WTC Health Program continues to be a critical lifeline for many, particularly when the number of 9/11-related cancer cases among rescue workers and responders has increased over the past decade and continues to grow. So far, more than 2,900 responders and survivors have been diagnosed with 9/11-related cancers, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Since 2012, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has added over 60 types of cancers to the list of 9/11-related illnesses covered by the WTC Health Program. Studies show that 9/11 workers have gotten certain cancers – including prostate, thyroid, leukemia, and multiple myeloma – at a significantly higher rate than the general population.

The September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF), which was reopened under the Zadroga 9/11 Health Bill, provides compensation for economic losses to 9/11 responders and survivors and their families for physical injuries as a result of involvement in Ground Zero, including breathing in toxins.  Since 2013, the VCF has made over 1,300 compensation determinations and has so far deemed over 7,000 injured 9/11 individuals eligible for compensation.

Numerous studies have documented the health effects of the WTC attacks, which include lower and upper respiratory, gastrointestinal, and mental health conditions. These illnesses have caused major financial strains on many of those exposed, who are subsequently no longer able to work and face the high price of health care without a federally-funded national program to incur the costs.

House co-sponsors include: Carolyn Maloney, Jerrold Nadler, Peter King, Daniel Maffei, Michael Fitzpatrick, Charles Rangel, Michael Grimm,  Nita Lowey, Gregory Meeks, William Owens, Carolyn McCarthy, Joseph Crowley, Jose Serrano, Sean Patrick Maloney, Steve Israel, Nydia Velázquez, Brian Higgins, Eliot Engel, Grace Meng, Chris Gibson, Timothy Bishop, Paul Tonko, Frank Pallone, Bill Pascrell Jr, Richard Neal, Rosa DeLauro, Rush Holt, Raul Grijalva, Sheila Jackson Lee, Albio Sires, Allyson Schwartz, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Carol Shea-Porter, John Larson, Joe Courtney, Stephen Lynch, and Zoe Lofgren.

The new *James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act* would:

**Continue the World Trade Center (WTC) Health Program.** Housed within the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) the WTC Health Program would provide medical monitoring and treatment for 9/11-related conditions to the over 60,0000 9/11 First Responders and to the more than 7,000 injured and ill 9/11 Survivors.

Clinical Centers of Excellence will continue to monitor and deliver treatment for responders and eligible members of the New York area, to be delivered by the FDNY, a consortium of clinics that includes Mt. Sinai, Long Island Jewish/North Shore Hospital, NYU, SUNY Stony Brook, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences Institute as well as by the NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation at Bellevue, East Elmhurst Hospital and Gouverneur Healthcare Services.

**Continue to Provide Monitoring and Treatment for Communities Throughout the Nation.** The program would provide medical monitoring and care for responders to the Pentagon and the Shanksville, PA crash site. This legislation would continue the access to treatment and benefits in all 50 states for over 6,000 9/11 responders, including those who came to help in the aftermath of 9/11 and live across the country.

**Continue the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF).**  The fund would remain open until 2041 to provide compensation for economic damages and loss for individuals who become ill from the toxins at Ground Zero. Because the bill continues to link the VCF to the limitation on liability, this long date allows protection for victims with latent claims while extending limitation on the liability period. The Special Master would be required to update regulations consistent with revisions to VCF under this Act.

**Continue the World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP).**  The WTC Health Program would remain open until 2041 to provide health care for injured and ill 9/11 responders and Survivors who become ill from the toxins at Ground Zero.  Because many of the 30,000 responders and survivors who are ill have multiple conditions which are chronic and will need care for the rest of their lives, this long date guarantees continued treatment.  There are responders and survivors who are participating in the World Trade Center Health Program from every state and 429 of 435 Congressional Districts.

**Continue to Establish City’s Cost Share.** The City of New York would continue to contribute a 10 percent matching cost share of the World Trade Center Health Program.

**Continue to Research New Conditions**. New research is critical for reaching breakthroughs in diagnosing and treating WTC-related illnesses. The legislation will continue research on WTC-related conditions.

**Extend Support for World Trade Center Health Registry.** Under the bill NIOSH would continue to extend and expand support for the World Trade Center Health Registry.

The current WTC Health Program and the reopened September 11th Victim Compensation Fund expire in 2015.

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