

SERGEANTS BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

POLICE DEPARTMENT, CITY OF NEW YORK

35 WORTH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10013

212.226.2180 FAX 212.431.4280

www.sbanyc.org



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

EDWARD D. MULLINS

February 28, 2019

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Cory Gardner
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Gillibrand and Gardner:

I am writing on behalf of the more than 13,000 active and retired members of the Sergeants Benevolent Association of the New York City Police Department to advise you of our strong support for S. 546, the “Never Forget the Heroes: Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) Act.” We are grateful to you both for your strong and steadfast commitment to those who suffer from the health effects of the 9/11 attacks.

Each year on September 11th, our nation pauses to recognize the anniversary of the most heinous terrorist attack in our history and to honor all those who made the ultimate sacrifice on that fateful day. But it is also a time to remember the ever-growing list of brave men and women who have been diagnosed with or died from a 9/11-related health condition. In 2017, 23 current or former members of the NYPD died of 9/11-related cancers and other illnesses. This is the exact number of NYPD officers our Department lost on 9/11. Today the total number of federal, state, and local law enforcement officers who have died of a 9/11-related illness is more than *double* the 71 who perished on 9/11. Unfortunately, these numbers are expected to continue to rise in the years ahead and as we continue to witness the long-term health effects among those who performed rescue and recovery efforts at Ground Zero.

Twice in the past decade, Congress has recognized this ongoing health crisis among 9/11 responders and survivors by passing the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act in 2010 and a reauthorization of the Act in 2015. As part of the 2015 legislation, Congress essentially made permanent the World Trade Center Health Program by extending its authorization to monitor and treat those with 9/11-related health conditions until 2090. In the nearly four years since the 2015 reauthorization, overall enrollment in the WTCHP has grown by nearly 19,000—men and women from each of the 50 states and nearly every Congressional District in the nation. These numbers highlight the foresight Congress showed in making the WTCHP permanent. Now Congress must do the same for the VCF and do so quickly,

particularly in light of the recent announcement that the VCF will soon be out of funds and will need to make severe cuts to award amounts to first responders and other claimants.

The legislation you have introduced will accomplish our shared goal of permanently reauthorizing the VCF and providing full compensation to the Heroes of 9/11. The SBA is proud to stand beside you again as we work to reauthorize this critically important program, and we are grateful for your strong leadership on this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me, or our Washington Representatives Andrew Siff and Chris Granberg at (202) 457-7756, as we work with you to reauthorize the VCF.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward Mullins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ed Mullins
President