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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

November 2, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

The tragedy on September 11, 2001 is one that has shaped our world and that we will never forget.

As we remember all of those we lost in New York City, Shankesville, and at the Pentagon, we must also remember the courageous first responders that arrived at the scenes and worked for days, weeks and months to look for survivors and clean up the sites. These brave men and women inhaled a toxic cocktail of burning chemicals, pulverized drywall and powdered cement while searching through what was left of the Twin Towers; unaware that their efforts would result in lifelong health consequences.

With the health component of this legislation having already expired, Congress must act to reauthorize the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act.

The James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act is a law established to provide permanent medical treatment, monitoring, and compensation to the surviving first responders and victims whom have developed many illnesses due to their heroic recovery and rescue efforts. The lists of illnesses they have contracted include severe upper and lower respiratory conditions, gastrointestinal illnesses, pulmonary diseases, and various cancers.

Currently, more than 72,000 9/11 responders and survivors are in the World Trade Center Health Program from all 50 states and 433 of 435 Congressional Districts. To date, more than 33,000 who are in the program are suffering from illnesses or injuries as a result of the 9/11 attacks, with over two-thirds of those have more than one condition. Chronic diseases like asthma, obstructive pulmonary disease, gastroesophageal reflux disease, and cancer continue to plague those who were exposed to the many toxins and carcinogens on that day.

4,100 of the participants enrolled in the World Trade Center Health Program have been certified with a 9/11 related cancer and an estimated 1,700 Americans have reportedly passed away from a 9/11 related illness. In New York alone, over 85 NYPD and over 131 FDNY personnel have died from their 9/11 illnesses; in fact, more officers have died from their illnesses since 9/11 than those who perished on 9/11 and we expect that tragically more Fire Firefighters will die of their cancers than were killed that day.

Brave men and women across our Country answered the call to assist our country in a time of vulnerability, and now it is our turn to insure that they receive the medical care that they desperately need and deserve. They came from all corners of the country bearing various racial, religious, and political stripes; united for a common cause to serve their country. These men and women deserve the support of every one of us honored to represent them.

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This legislation is currently co-sponsored by 61 of my colleagues in the United States Senate, including Senators Ayotte, Baldwin, Bennet, Blumenthal, Blunt, Booker, Boxer, Brown, Cantwell, Capito, Cardin, Carper, Casey, Collins, Coons, Cotton, Daines, Donnelly, Durbin, Ernst, Feinstein, Franken, Gillibrand, Graham, Heinrich, Heitkamp, Hirono, Kaine, King, Kirk, Klobuchar, Leahy, Manchin, Markey, McCain, McCaskill, Menendez, Merkley, Mikulski, Moran, Murkowski, Murphy, Murray, Nelson, Peters, Reed, Reid, Rounds, Sanders, Schatz, Schumer, Shaheen, Stabenow, Sullivan, Tester, Toomey, Udall, Vitter, Warner, Warren, Whitehouse, and Wyden.

If you would like to cosponsor S. 928 the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act, please contact Brooke Jamison at [brooke\\_jamison@gillibrand.senate.gov](mailto:brooke_jamison@gillibrand.senate.gov) or Brian Looser at [brian\\_looser@kirk.senate.gov](mailto:brian_looser@kirk.senate.gov).

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand



Mark Kirk