

November 9, 2015

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515-0001

Dear Mr. Speaker:

We write to urge that you make it a top priority of your new role as Speaker of the United States House of Representatives to permanently reauthorize and fully fund H.R. 1786/S. 928, The James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act (Zadroga Act), as expeditiously as possible. This is an issue of national significance that strikes at the heart of our national psyche and has a direct and immediate impact on thousands of our residents.

There is no greater example of selfless, patriotic, and heroic actions than the response to the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Somerset County, Pennsylvania. Following these attacks, thousands of first responders, construction workers and volunteers who live in our cities and towns selflessly acted to comb through dust, debris and rubble to look for survivors and eventually restore normalcy. They were exposed to deadly toxins and carcinogens at Ground Zero while the Federal Government said that the air was safe. We cannot fail to support these heroes living in our cities, and who live in every state across our great nation.

The House Zadroga Act was introduced by Representatives Carolyn Maloney, Jerrold Nadler and Peter King, while the Senate counterpart was introduced by Senators Kirsten Gillibrand, Charles Schumer, Robert Menendez, Cory Booker, Richard Blumenthal, Chris Murphy, Elizabeth Warren, Jeanne Shaheen, and Jeff Merkley. To date, there is broad bipartisan support for these bills; 247 members of the U.S. House of Representatives and 63 members of the U.S. Senate support them.

The legislation will permanently extend and fully fund two significant programs: the World Trade Center (WTC) Health Program and September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF). The WTC Health program provides treatment or medical monitoring for over 72,000 responders across the country. The VCF provides compensation for injured or ill 9/11 responders and survivors from the aftermath of the attacks, and has made over 6,285 determinations for injured and ill responders and survivors or their families.

The current WTC Health program expired on September 30th, 2015 and the VCF will expire in 2016. This has put at risk the continued treatment of current and future patients. More than 33,000 9/11 first responders and survivors have developed at least one illness, and doctors are expecting future patients whose symptoms may have not yet manifested. If the law is not

renewed and fully funded, patients will be deprived of treatment, while families already awarded compensation could see their payments cut by half.

Our first responders were there for us on 9/11 – we must be there for them now. We owe it to these men and women living in all of our communities to ensure they are cared for as they face the health effects of helping this country during and after one of the worst attacks on U.S. soil. As such, we ask you to permanently reauthorize these critical health care and compensation programs.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Mayor Bill de Blasio – New York City (D)

Mayor Eric Garcetti – Los Angeles (D)

Mayor Annise Parker - Houston (D)

Mayor Michael Nutter – Philadelphia (D)

Mayor Greg Stanton – Phoenix (D)

Mayor Steve Adler – Austin (D)

Mayor Martin Walsh – Boston (D)

Mayor John Giles – Mesa (R)

Mayor Tomas Regalado – Miami (R)

Mayor Betsy Hodges – Minneapolis (D)

Mayor Bob Buckhorn – Tampa (D)

Mayor Paul Soglin – Madison (D)

Mayor Jorge Elorza – Providence (D)

Mayor J. Christian Bollwage – Elizabeth (D)

Mayor Javier Gonzales – Santa Fe (D)

Mayor Dawn Zimmer – Hoboken (D)

County Executive Rob Astorino – Westchester (R)

County Executive Edward Mangano – Nassau (R)

County Executive Ed Day – Rockland (R)

County Executive Steve Bellone – Suffolk (D)

County Executive Marcus Molinaro – Dutchess (R)

County Executive Steve Neuhaus – Orange (R)

County Executive MaryEllen Odell – Putnam (R)

Town Supervisor Rich Schaffer – Babylon (D)

Town Supervisor Frank P. Petrone - Huntington (D)

Supervisor-Elect Anthony J. Santino – Hempstead (R)

Supervisor-Elect Jay Schneiderman – Southampton (I)