

POLICE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION
of the **NEW YORK STATE TROOPERS, INC.**



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The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senate
478 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

On behalf of the New York State Troopers Police Benevolent Association, representing nearly 7,000 active and retired members, I am writing to you to express our full support for S. 546, the Never Forget the Heroes: Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victims Compensation Fund Act.

On 9/11, 500 Troopers from across the state were sent to New York City that afternoon to help. Troopers assisted with traffic control and emergency operations, members of the specialized Mobile Response Teams helped in the rescue and recovery efforts, the scuba team assisted in the inspection of docks and surrounding waters, the K-9 unit provided cadaver dogs and bomb dogs where needed, and the aviation unit transported medical supplies and assisted with emergency medical flights.

Tragically, more federal, state and local law enforcement officers have died from 9/11-related illnesses over the past 17 years than were lost on September 11, 2001. 9/11 responders and survivors are still battling serious health crises resulting from exposure to the toxins at Ground Zero.

The New York State Troopers Police Benevolent Association supported the passage of the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act in 2010 and its reauthorization in 2015 to ensure our nation took care of the victims and first responders who are coping with 9/11-related chronic health conditions.

In 2015, Congress reauthorized the World Trade Center Health Program until 2090 and reauthorized and fully-funded the 9/11 Victims Compensation Fund (VCF) at \$7.375 billion for 5 years. Unfortunately, this has proven to not be enough. On February 15, the VCF Special Master declared that there is only \$2.375 billion left of the \$7.375 billion to compensate all pending and anticipated claims through December 18, 2020. She further notes that there has been a dramatic increase in claims over the past four months—including 4,800 compensation claims filed in January 2019 alone.

There is insufficient funding remaining in the VCF to fully pay all current and projected claims. The VCF has decided to reduce payout amounts to ensure that all claims receive at least some level of award. As of February 25, 2019, pending and newly submitted claims will see their award amount reduced by *50 to 70 percent*.

The VCF award is often a lifeline for survivors and families struggling with loss and financial instability and it is imperative that the VCF is permanently reauthorized as soon as possible. S.546 honors those who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our nation. It is our obligation and duty to remember these heroes and ensure that survivors who risked their lives to protect us continue to receive the compensation that they deserve.

The New York State Troopers Police Benevolent Association stands ready to support any efforts necessary to pass this legislation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: tmungeer@nystpba.org or 518-462-7448.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Mungeer
President