



International Union of Operating Engineers

AFFILIATED WITH THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

March 5, 2019

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney
2308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

JAMES T. CALLAHAN
GENERAL PRESIDENT

Dear Representative Maloney:

The International Union of Operating Engineers is proud to support your legislation to extend the authority for the September 11th Victims' Compensation Fund, H.R. 1327, the Never Forget the Heroes Act. This bipartisan legislation extends support to victims of the terrorist attacks until 2090, the same year as the World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP) expires.

The International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) represents nearly 400,000 members in over 120 local unions across the United States and Canada, including thousands of New Yorkers, many of whom responded to the tragic events on September 11, 2001, and thereafter. During the following days and months, Operating Engineers and thousands of emergency responders rushed to the World Trade Center (WTC) site to assist in rescue and recovery operations. These brave workers and other nearby residents were exposed to a toxic mix of dust and fumes from the collapse of the WTC buildings and the subsequent fires, some of which lingered for weeks. Now thousands of these individuals are suffering from serious respiratory diseases, cancers, and other health problems as a result of their heroic efforts to assist in the nation's worst incident of terrorism.

A rapid and astonishing increase in late onset cancers associated with 9/11 has coincided with a spike in claims to the Victims Compensation Fund (VCF), a spike that no one could have predicted. On February 15, 2019, the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund announced that effective immediately it would be reducing compensation awards for individuals who have developed 9/11 related illnesses by 50% to 70% (depending on the time at which claims were filed) because there are insufficient funds to pay all anticipated claims for compensation. The VCF has seen a dramatic and unexpected 3800% increase in cancer claims.

Needless to say, the cuts to the VCF are devastating and insulting to the men and women who have endured the immediate and traumatic aftermath of September 11th. This is an injustice that should not be allowed to stand, and your legislation provides the remedy.

The International Union of Operating Engineers deeply appreciates your continued efforts to support the victims of 9/11, and we proudly endorse your legislation, H.R. 1327, the Never Forget the Heroes Act, and we look forward to working with you to enact it into law in this 116th Congress.

Thank you again for your leadership.

Sincerely,

James T. Callahan
General President

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