



PHOENIX LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION

The Professional Association of Phoenix Police Officers Since 1975

March 29, 2019

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

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

On behalf of the Phoenix Law Enforcement Association representing 2,100 officers, 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.

This year will mark the 18th anniversary of the deadliest terrorist attack on our nation's soil. As we remember those who died on September 11, 2001, we also must recognize those we continue to lose as the lasting effects of that day make themselves known. We have lost more federal, state and local law enforcement officers from 9/11-related illnesses over the past 17 years than we 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 Phoenix Law Enforcement 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. James Zadroga, a New York City Police Department Detective, died of respiratory disease caused by his exposure to toxic chemicals during rescue and recovery efforts at Ground Zero. He was the first of too many.

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 Phoenix Law Enforcement Association stands ready to support any efforts necessary to pass this legislation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (602) 246 7869.

Sincerely,



Michael Britt London

President

Phoenix Law Enforcement Association

Office [602 246 7869](tel:6022467869)

Cell [602 361 2656](tel:6023612656)

Email mlondon@azplea.com

