

July 15, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chairman,
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member,
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Chairman Graham, and Senator Feinstein:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to advise you of our strong support for S. 546 / H.R. 1327, the “Never Forget the Heroes: James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) Act.” We appreciate the Majority Leader’s commitment to bring this bill to the floor before the August recess, and urge you to advance the House-passed version of this legislation as expeditiously as possible. The passage of H.R. 1327 last Friday by a resounding vote of 402-12 in the House, coupled with the 72 Senators cosponsoring S. 546, is unequivocal evidence that the support in Congress for swift action to permanently reauthorize the VCF is equal to that of the more than 400,000 federal, state, and local law enforcement officers and executives we represent.

The simple fact is that we cannot wait any longer. We need the Senate to act now. Far too many of us left our health at Ground Zero, Fresh Kills Landfill, Shanksville, and at the Pentagon. We did so willingly, rushing into an environment more toxic than anything we have seen before or since. Eighteen years later, we are sick and we are dying because, despite what we were told, the air was not safe to breathe. Nearly two decades after the most heinous terrorist attack in our nation’s history, the scope of the 9/11 health crisis is staggering. To date, there are more than 75,000 first responders from every state in the nation who are receiving medical monitoring or treatment through the World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP). Nearly 8,500 of these responders have been diagnosed with one or more 9/11-related cancers, of which 560 have died of their conditions. In fact, within law enforcement alone, the number of officers who have died of a 9/11-related health condition is now *triple* the 71 that fell on September 11th, 2001.

For the men and women we represent, this is not the first time that we have had to ask Congress to do the right thing for the tens of thousands of first responders who are suffering from 9/11-related illnesses. But with your help, it can be the last. Nearly four years ago, Congress recognized the urgent and ongoing needs of 9/11 responders by permanently reauthorizing the WTCHP. Now it must do the same for the VCF, and do so quickly. This is particularly important in light of the fact that the Special Master has been forced to impose severe cuts to award amounts because of a shortage of funds. That is why the undersigned organizations strongly urge you to expedite consideration of this important legislation and send it to the President as quickly as possible. We stand ready to work with you to do just that.

Sincerely,

Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association
Major County Sheriffs of America
National Narcotics Officers’ Associations’ Coalition
National Organization of Black Law Enforcement
Executives
United Coalition of Public Safety

FBI Agents Association
National Association of Police Organizations
National Sheriffs’ Association
National Treasury Employees Union
Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI
Sergeants Benevolent Association NYPD

Detectives Endowment Association NYPD
Captains Endowment Association NYPD
State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers
Ft. Worth Police Officers Association
San Diego Police Officers Association

Lieutenants Benevolent Association NYPD
Florida Police Benevolent Association
San Jose Peace Officers Association
San Francisco Police Officers Association
Seattle Police Officers Guild

CC: Members, United States Senate