

# SERGEANTS BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

POLICE DEPARTMENT, CITY OF NEW YORK

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## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

EDWARD D. MULLINS

July 22, 2019

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 13,000 members of the Sergeants Benevolent Association of the New York City Police Department (SBA), I am writing to ask you to do the right thing tomorrow for the thousands of law enforcement officers across this nation who are sick and dying of 9/11-related cancers and other health conditions. I urge you to vote *for* H.R. 1327, the “Never Forget the Heroes: James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez Permanent Authorization of the September 11<sup>th</sup> Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) Act,” as passed by the House on July 12<sup>th</sup>, and to reject the two attempts that will be made by your colleagues, Senators Lee and Paul, to weaken this important legislation.

The amendments that have been proposed by Senators Lee and Paul to H.R. 1327 would likely do nothing more than ensure that SBA members will be forced to return to Washington in a few short years to once again ask Congress to provide funding for the VCF. One thing that is certain, however, is that there will be far fewer of us left to make that ask. To date nearly 8,500 first 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 has now *tripled* the 71 that fell on 9/11. Sen. Lee’s amendment is particularly troubling in that it would impose the same types of caps on VCF funding that have proven grossly insufficient over the past decade. In fact, the caps imposed by the 2015 reauthorization of the VCF lasted only three years before the Special Master was forced to cut claimant awards by as much as 50-70 percent. This is simply unacceptable.

Nearly 18 years ago, the federal government let down our first responders by assuring them the air was safe to breathe at Ground Zero. That decision resulted in both life-altering and life-ending consequences for the same first responders and surviving families who are now looking to Congress to bring certainty and stability to the VCF for years to come. These Heroes of 9/11 should not be forced to endure a similar mistake now from the Senate.

On behalf of the membership of the Sergeants Benevolent Association, we again urge you to vote against the Lee and Paul amendments to H.R. 1327, and to vote for passage of the House-passed legislation as is.

Sincerely,

Ed Mullins  
President

