



Mario Cilento
President

Terrence L. Melvin
Secretary-Treasurer

August 12, 2021

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the New York State AFL-CIO's 3000 local union affiliates and their 2.5 million members, retirees, and families, I write to ask for your support of S.2683/H.R.4965, the "9/11 Responder and Survivor Health Funding Correction Act," sponsored by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Representative Carolyn Maloney.

Recognizing the continuing health crisis resulting from exposure to 9/11 toxins, Congress created the World Trade Center Health Program to monitor and treat those developing 9/11 illnesses. In 2015, Congress reauthorized the program until 2090 as its need became only more urgent and the program's efficacy undisputed.

Currently the program serves responders and survivors from the World Trade Center and lower Manhattan, the Pentagon, and the Shanksville crash site, who live in every State and 434 out of 435 Congressional Districts.

The reauthorization imposed yearly spending caps tied to inflation. Medical inflation has increased faster than regular inflation and therefore, the program faces a projected funding shortfall starting in 2025. Unfortunately, the result is care for the Heroes of 9/11, many suffering from 9/11-associated cancers caused by their toxic exposures, is once again in danger.

The "9/11 Responder and Survivor Health Funding Correction Act" would ensure there is adequate funding for the World Trade Center Health Program to deal with the projected shortfall. It would also address other statutory issues including providing greater flexibility in program certifications, making the Program Administrator responsible for credentialing providers, and developing a cohort to study the impact of the toxins and the attacks on emerging youth's health.

As we approach the 20th anniversary of September 11th, we must all renew our commitment to fighting for responders and survivors. Passing S.2683/H.R.4965 is a critical way for Congress to demonstrate through decisive action that "Never Forget" is more than a slogan.

Thank you for your consideration, and should you have any questions, please have your staff contact Ryan Delgado at rdelgado@nysaflcio.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mario Cilento".

Mario Cilento
President

MC:RD:lc

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