



ROBERT W. NEWELL, JR, President • ALY Y. WADDY, Secretary-Treasurer • JOSEPH D. WADDY, EVP/Recorder

August 23, 2021

Dear Members of Congress,

Representing 17,500 workers across New York State, UFCW Local 1500's membership works in the grocery industry, impacting the lives of all different people in our communities. Our union writes to express strong support of S.2683/H.R.4965, the "9/11 Responder and Survivor Health Funding Correction Act," which is key to supporting the heroes in our neighborhoods and communities and maintaining their health. Our members remember September 11, 2001, very well, and will never forget the pain and sorrow that terrible event continues to cause today. It is key for the Congress and Senate to continue the benefits provided by the World Trade Center Health Program.

The World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP) provides treatment and monitoring to over 110,000 first responders across the Lower Manhattan, Pentagon, and Shanksville, PA sites who had their health adversely impacted by the terrorist attacks. In total, there are recipients of the WTCHP living in 434 of the 435 Congressional Districts—this is an issue that transcends party and ideology. Due to medical inflation, the funding—reauthorized through 2090—will face major shortfalls beginning in 2025. This legislation is key in maintaining benefits for first responders not in the far-away future but very soon, and therefore action is necessary.

In addition to funding, there are several technical changes that would benefit both the fund and recipients in providing care. Making certification conditions more dynamic by changing the requirement from a "physician" to a "licensed health care provider" would give greater flexibility to plans and providers to ensure quality services get to first responders. This technical change will benefit the future longevity of this program as the survivors of September 11th and first responders continue to age.

Another important feature of this legislation is the investment in emerging health impacts on the youth. With more than 35,000 of the 360,000 survivors and first responders being children, there are evolving issues related to physical and mental health this legislation will assist in confronting. Continuing to aid those who experienced trauma at a young age will not only benefit those survivors but future generations as well.

Our union strongly supports the heroes and first responders of September 11th and will never forget their bravery and sacrifices. Many of the survivors from the traumatic attack continue to suffer and need their entire community and country to stand with them. We are asking you support S.2683/H.R.4965, and the World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP). Please never allow our federal government to forget the people that gave some (or all) on that day.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Newell, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Robert W. Newell, Jr.

President