



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS®

EDWARD A. KELLY
General President

FRANK V. LÍMA
General Secretary-Treasurer

March 21, 2023

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitchell McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell,

On behalf of the more than 334,000 members of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), I urge you to support the 9/11 Responder and Survivor Health Funding Correction Act of 2023 (S. 569). The World Trade Center Health Program (the Program) supports 115,000 first responders and survivors of the September 11th terrorist attacks and faces a funding shortfall in 2028. These first responders served our nation dutifully on 9/11, and now Congress must stand with them when they are in need.

We continue to see an ever-growing number of illnesses among 9/11 first responders and survivors. We have lost 271 fire fighters from the Fire Department of New York alone to 9/11-related cancers and other diseases – a number almost equal to the 343 fire fighters who died that day. The Program provides necessary health monitoring and treatment to more than 82,000 fire fighters from New York City and around the nation who served in response and recovery roles following the attacks. Since its inception, the Program has identified nearly 65,000 incidences of cancer, aerodigestive conditions, mental health needs, and musculoskeletal injuries. Last year alone, the Program provided more than 46,000 screening exams and 38,000 treatments for enrollees.

Congress reauthorized the Program in 2015, but the rising cost of healthcare and the growth of new enrollees is outpacing spending caps. While we appreciated Congress' appropriation of additional funding for the Program last year, these funds were insufficient to fully avert the shortfall. Based on current projections, the Program will need to make painful cuts to enrollment in 2028 and curtail its services. This legislation provides essential adjustments to the Program to ensure it will have the stability to continue caring for our brother and sister first responders who served our nation on 9/11.

The IAFF urges you to continue standing with our 9/11 first responders. Without Congressional action, these individuals will lose the health monitoring and treatments they have relied upon for over 20 years. I look forward to working with you to secure the passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward A. Kelly".

Edward A. Kelly
General President