



New York City Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Labor and Political Leaders Call for Passage of 9/11 Health and Compensation Act: Legislation to Provide Medical Care and Compensation to Those Sick with World Trade Center Illnesses



At a press conference today in New York City, labor and political leaders joined with first responders to the World Trade Center attacks. They called for immediate passage of the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act (HR. 847/S. 1334).

The legislation would provide medical care and compensation for those who are sick with World Trade Center illnesses, including first responders who came to New York from every state and nearly all Congressional districts in the nation.

The 9/11 Health and Compensation Act would:

- provide medical monitoring and treatment benefits to eligible emergency responders and recovery and cleanup workers who responded to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001
- provide initial health evaluation, monitoring and treatment benefits to residents and other building occupants and area workers who were directly impacted and adversely affected by the attacks
- reopen the Victim Compensation Fund to provide compensation for those who have been sick by 9/11 exposures and to address the over 10,000 pending lawsuits brought by sick 9/11 responders
- provide ongoing medical care of 9/11 health conditions to approximately 15,000 additional WTC responders and 15,000 additional WTC community members.

It would also require the World Trade Center program administrator to:

- Implement a quality assurance program
- Establish the WTC Health Program Scientific/Technical Advisory Committee

Denis Hughes, President of the New York State AFL-CIO stated, "We are closer than ever to getting this legislation passed. So we can't allow this opportunity to slip away. The more time passes, memories fade, and the farther away we get from understanding why this is so important. "It's not nearly enough to gather here each year and pay our respect through words and sentiment. We must begin to repay our debt to those heroes who risked their lives on that fateful day, to the best of our ability. And the only way to do that is to pass this legislation."

Jack Ahern, President of the New York City Central Labor Council stated, "Today, on behalf of the thousands of working people who gave so much for our country in the days, weeks and months following 9/11, the labor movement is calling for a long overdue government guarantee to cover the permanent, comprehensive medical monitoring, treatment and compensation for workers and all those whose health was compromised as a result of the toxins of 9/11. As we can see every day around Ground Zero, we are rebuilding this city. Now, we must rebuild the health of those who gave so much. No American can wish to be as courageous as those who seized the moment and prevented even more lives from being lost."

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, a co-sponsor of the bill stated, "Eight years is long enough for the heroes and heroines of 9/11 to wait for health care. Our nation owes a tremendous debt to 9/11 responders and others sick from the attacks, and we intend to start paying that debt this year by finally passing a comprehensive 9/11 health and compensation program. It is the least our great nation can do."

Congressman Jerrold Nadler, a co-sponsor of the bill stated, "We are making progress everyday to advance this legislation. As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I was extremely pleased that we were able to move the bill through the committee this summer on its way to the floor of the House of Representatives. We must continue to build on that momentum to finally make the 9/11 Health and Compensation Act the law of the land. We couldn't have gotten even this far without our friends in labor and we are tremendously grateful for your efforts."