

June 7, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
H-107
The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
S-230
The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
S-221
The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
H-204
The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer and Leader McCarthy,

On behalf of Mayors, Municipal and County Leaders from across the nation, we join together to urgently request that the September 11th Victims Compensation Fund (VCF) be fully funded and made permanent. This legislation is sponsored by a broad cross-section of Members of Congress from across the political spectrum and nation. As support continues to grow, we call on Congress to support the swift passage of the bipartisan H.R.1327/S.546 – Never Forget the Heroes: Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act.

September 11, 2001 left an indelible mark on our nation. On that fateful morning, 2,977 lives were lost and thousands more were injured. Yet many more would develop illnesses from working on the scene. The heartbreaking reality is that more people may have died from 9/11-related injuries and diseases than were lost during the attacks themselves. The VCF provides compensation to individuals or surviving family members who were injured, sickened, or killed as a result of the 9/11 attacks, or the exposure to toxins as part of the recovery efforts at the Site of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the Shanksville crash site. On February 15, 2019, the VCF made the announcement that a funding shortfall would result in drastic cuts to all claims. This equates to reductions of 50 percent for all pending claims and a staggering 70 percent for future claims.

To be clear, this shortfall does not only affect individuals in New York, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania where the attacks took place. First responders, law enforcement personnel and volunteers poured in from across the nation to render aid in the immediate aftermath of the most devastating attack on the U.S. mainland. To date, over 93,000 first responders from every state and from 434 out of 435 Congressional Districts are currently enrolled in the World Trade Center (WTC) Health Program. As local leaders, we understand how critically important the VCF is for our communities because we have witnessed our residents' suffering firsthand.

In 2015, Congress authorized and fully funded the World Trade Center Health Program, providing medical monitoring and treatment for responders and survivors with 9/11-related injuries and illnesses. Congress also reauthorized the VCF, providing an additional \$4.6 billion dollars in compensation for these victims and their families, many of whom are suffering or dying from respiratory diseases and cancer. Given the full scope of need and the record number of victims applying, the funding is quickly running out. Almost \$5 billion has already been paid, while nearly 12,000 claims remain under review. Further, any responder or survivor who becomes ill after December 18, 2020 would be ineligible due to lack of funds.

As leaders, we are duty-bound to provide our heroes with the support they have rightfully earned, and to respect and cherish those who became ill after running into harm's way to save lives on one of the darkest days of our nation's history. The Never Forget the Heroes Act of 2019 affirms our responsibility as Americans to protect the victims of 9/11-related illnesses by reauthorizing the fund through 2090, and funding all current and future claims. We urge you to reauthorize the VCF by swiftly enacting H.R. 1327/S. 546. Those suffering from 9/11-related illnesses cannot wait, and we hope Congress does not wait to pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Bill de Blasio, Mayor of New York City, New York
Martin Walsh, Mayor of Boston, Massachusetts
Steve Adler, Mayor of Austin, Texas
Bryan K Barnett, Mayor of Rochester Hills, Michigan
David J Berger, Mayor of Lima, Ohio
Ravinder Singh Bhalla, Mayor of Hoboken, New Jersey
Muriel Bowser, Mayor of Washington, District of Columbia
Sharon W Broome, Mayor of Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Roy D Buol, Mayor of Dubuque, Iowa
Latoya Cantrell, Mayor of New Orleans, Louisiana
Daniel Corona, Mayor of West Wendover, Nevada
Pauline Russo Cutter, Mayor of San Leandro, California
Jacob R Day, Mayor of Salisbury, Maryland
Michelle De La Isla, Mayor of Topeka, Kansas
James A Diossa, Mayor of Central Falls, Rhode Island
Denny Doyle, Mayor of Beaverton, Oregon
Mike Duggan, Mayor of Detroit, Michigan
Buddy Dyer, Mayor of Orlando, Florida
Jorge O Elorza, Mayor of Providence, Rhode Island
Greg Fischer, Mayor of Louisville, Kentucky
Steven M Fulop, Mayor of Jersey City, New Jersey
Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles, California
Robert Garcia, Mayor of Long Beach, California
John Giles, Mayor of Mesa, Arizona
Rex Hardin, Mayor of Pompano Beach, Florida
Andy Linko, Mayor of Brownstown Township, Michigan
Jeff Longwell, Mayor of Wichita, Kansas

Debra March, Mayor of Henderson, Nevada
Donald Margo, Mayor of El Paso, Texas
Monica Martinez, Mayor of Perris, California
Lily Mei, Mayor of Fremont, California
Carlos Méndez, Mayor of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico
Mark W Mitchell, Mayor of Tempe, Arizona
Kenneth D Miyagishima, Mayor of Las Cruces, New Mexico
W John Moore, Mayor of Yachats, Oregon
Alan L Nagy, Mayor of Newark, California
Frank C Ortis, Mayor of Pembroke Pines, Florida
Toni Preckwinkle, Mayor of Cook County, Illinois
Mike Rawlings, Mayor of Dallas, Texas
Mary Casillas Salas, Mayor of Chula Vista, California
Hillary L Schieve, Mayor of Reno, Nevada
Jeffrey Slavin, Mayor of Somerset, Maryland
Jason B Snider, Mayor of Tigard, Oregon
Levar Stoney, Mayor of Richmond, Virginia
John Tecklenburg, Mayor of Charleston, South Carolina
Alan Webber, Mayor of Santa Fe, New Mexico
Patrick L Wojahn, College Park, Maryland
Stephen J Acquario, Executive Director, New York State Association of Counties
Peter Baynes, Executive Director, New York State Conference of Mayors
Steven Bellone, County Executive, Suffolk County, New York
Ad Berwanger, Chairman, Wyoming County, New York
Philip R Church, Administrator, Oswego County, New York
Laura Curran, Nassau County Executive, New York
Ed Day, County Executive, Rockland County, New York
Jason T Garnar, County Executive, Broome County, New York
C William Gaylor, Iii, County Legislator, Nassau County, New York
Beth Hunt, Treasurer, Hamilton County, New York
Margaret M Kennedy, Board Member, Otsego County Board of Supervisors, New York
George Latimer, Westchester County Executive, New York
John F Marren, Chairman, Ontario County Board of Supervisors, New York
Daniel P. McCoy, County Executive, Albany County, New York
J Ryan McMahon II, County Executive, Onondaga County, New York
Marcus J Molinaro, County Executive, Dutchess County, New York
Charles H Nesbitt, Jr, Chief Administrative Officer, Orleans County, New York
Steven M Neuhaus, County Executive, Orange County, New York
Richard J Nicoletto, Nassau County Legislature, New York
Maryellen Odell, County Executive, Carmel, New York
Matthew L Ossenfort, County Executive, Montgomery County, New York
Scott B Samuelson, County Legislator, Sullivan County, New York
Martha Sauerbrey, Chairperson, Tioga County, New York
Amy E Sayegh, Legislator, Putnam County, New York
Michael E Zurlo, Administrator, Clinton County, New York
Nassau County Village Officials Association

Adam M Acquario, Mayor of East Nassau, New York
Diane Argyle, Mayor of Valatie, New York
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Josh Coh, Mayor of City of Rye, New York
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Brendan G Coyne, Mayor of Village of Cornwall-On-Hudson, New York
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Joseph M D'Agostino, Mayor of Vernon, New York
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Rick Davis, Mayor of City of Tonawanda, New York
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Nora Haagenson, Mayor of Baxter Estates, New York
Gary A Hadden, Mayor of Village of Victor, New York
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John F Howe, Mayor of Chatham, New York
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Steven D Jeffers, Mayor of Oriskany Falls, New York

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Meg Kelly, Mayor of Saratoga Springs, New York
Robert Kennedy, Mayor of Freeport, New York
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Frank A Leak, Mayor of Village of Colonie, New York
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James A Lofranco, Mayor of Village South Blooming Grove, New York
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Greg Luisi, Mayor of Tuckahoe, New York
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Robert Mcloughlin, Mayor of Dobbs Ferry, New York
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Chance Mullen, Mayor of Village of Pelham, New York
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Kevin Neary, Mayor of Village of Richmondville, New York
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Gary Penders, Mayor of Spencerport, New York
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Jeffrey Pravat, Mayor of Massapequa Park, New York
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Paul F Rickenbach, Mayor of Village of East Hampton, New York
Thomas M Roach, Mayor of White Plains, New York
Michelle M Roman, Mayor of Lockport, New York
Bruno F Romano, Mayor of East Rockaway, New York

Sandra Schroeder, Mayor of Village of Sag Harbor, New York
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Robert J Scottaline, Mayor of Village of Lake Grove, New York
Randy M Shayler, Mayor of Village of Wellsville, New York
Kathy Sheehan, Mayor of Albany, New York
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Samuel Teresi, Mayor of Jamestown, New York
James J Thompson, Mayor of Wurtsboro, New York
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Lorraine Walsh, Mayor of Larchmont, New York
Steven Weinberg, Mayor of Village of Thomaston, New York
Anne Welch, Mayor of Village of Lewiston, New York
Paul D Whorrall, Mayor of Village of Manlius, New York
Robert Williams, Mayor of Village of Elmsford, New York
Ronald E Wilson, Mayor of Village of Port Byron, New York
Russell Wood, Mayor of Village of Bloomingburg, New York
Judith A Woodshaw, Mayor of Stillwater, New York
Robert M Zack, Mayor of Village of Laurens, New York