

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

July 11, 2022

Dear Representative:

The AFL-CIO urges you to cosponsor H.R. 4965, the “9/11 Responder and Survivor Health Funding Correction Act.” The World Trade Center Health Program continues to take care of responders and survivors in every state of the U.S. and nearly every Congressional district. Every member of Congress should support this legislation.

These bipartisan bills, introduced by Senator Kristen Gillibrand and Representative Carolyn Maloney, would alleviate funding issues and create more flexibility and research in the World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP) that provides medical monitoring and treatment to emergency responders, recovery and clean-up workers, and others suffering serious diseases as a result of hazardous exposures resulting from the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

In the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks, tens of thousands of emergency workers, construction workers, and others rushed to the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and Shanksville crash site to assist in rescue and recovery operations. These workers and residents, and others near Ground Zero, were exposed to a toxic mix of dust and fumes from the collapse of the World Trade Center and the fires that lingered. Now many of these individuals, particularly the heroic responders who experienced the highest exposures, are suffering from serious cancers, respiratory diseases and other health problems. We must ensure those who have been made ill from the attacks receive appropriate medical care and improve their livelihoods.

Because of these urgent and critical needs, Congress reauthorized the WTCHP through 2090—a bipartisan effort; however, this reauthorization was tied to regular inflation rather than medical inflation, which is increasing much faster, leading to a program funding shortfall expected in 2026. This means that responders and other survivors who were meant to be covered by this health program will now face cuts in available care and the program will have to stop taking new responders and survivors starting October 2024. This legislation also provides commonsense flexibility that will help eliminate barriers for survivors receiving care and initiates much needed research on air toxins among a youth cohort during the 9/11 attacks.

The AFL-CIO strongly urges you to support and cosponsor H.R. 4965, which would preserve care for 9/11 responders and survivors who need and deserve long-term medical monitoring and treatment.

Sincerely,



William Samuel
Director, Government Affairs