

RESOLUTION 32: HONORING THE WORKERS OF SEPTEMBER 11TH ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

On September 11, 2001, four coordinated terrorist attacks were carried out on U.S. soil and airspace. The attacks directly killed 2,977 people from 90 nations: 2,753 people were killed in New York; 184 people were killed at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia; and 40 people were killed on Flight 93 in Pennsylvania.

Twenty-five years after September 11, 2001, families are still losing their loved ones. Firefighters who walked out of the towers that morning now have cancers that took two decades to surface. Building & Construction Trade members who cut steel on the pile are gone. So are sanitation workers, transit workers, telecom workers, court officers, paramedics, and volunteers from locals across the country who came to New York City to help. Their sacrifices will never be forgotten.

The work of responding to and cleaning up after September 11th was union. First responders ran into the towers, saving as many lives as possible, with many losing their own. Construction trades' members cleared 16 acres of debris working around the clock with the assistance of emergency lighting provided by motion picture and television technicians and teamsters, and rebuilt Lower Manhattan over the course of a decade. Transit workers kept the city moving. Nurses, healthcare workers, mental health professionals staffed the hospitals, morgues, call centers, and public services, keeping New York together. Educators provided stability to New York City's youth during this time of crisis. At the Pentagon, union members responded immediately, as the attack engulfed their workplace and claimed the lives of their colleagues. In Shanksville, local emergency responders at the site of Flight 93 did the same. Our union sisters and brothers were also some of the victims of these attacks; from those in public safety, to aviation, maintenance, construction, utilities and many more. Their sacrifices and associated adversities continue.

Workers and their loved ones are still paying the price. There are more than 150,000 responders and survivors enrolled in the World Trade Center Health Program living in every state and from 434 of 435 Congressional districts. Tens of thousands of our members, families and neighbors have been certified with 9/11-related cancers, respiratory disease, and conditions linked to exposure at Ground Zero, the Pentagon, and Shanksville.

The number of first responders to die from exposure-related illness now exceeds those lost on the attacks of September 11th. The James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, which the Labor Movement and the 9/11 community first won in 2010, was reauthorized in 2015, and again in 2019 and every reauthorization has been a fight. In January of 2026, funding was ensured through 2040. Yet, affected workers who toiled in the debris continue to become ill and pass away at rates that strain the resources of existing programs.

This anniversary comes at a time when unions are under attack. The lesson of September 11th should be the opposite: strong unions and their members help the communities that comprise this nation. The country survives crises because organized, working people deliver and keep showing up in the throes of disaster. They're trained, prepared, and they have the courage to tackle the emergency regardless of how daunting.

One of the worst days in our country's history showcased some of the best of our collective humanity. We came together to help one another, regardless of background. The Labor Movement does not separate its defense and support of those workers affected by the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001, from its defense of the freedoms we fight for every day; they are one and the same.

The AFL-CIO therefore resolves to:

- Mark the 25th anniversary of September 11th in partnership with the New York City Central Labor Council, the New York State AFL-CIO, the Virginia AFL-CIO, the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, and the other central labor bodies and affiliates whose members were impacted. Ensuring that these workers and their families, and that all that lost their lives in the attacks, are remembered across the country.
- Oppose any change to the World Trade Center Health Program that could result in cuts, eligibility reductions, or any new barriers making it harder for survivors and their families to access support.
- Defend the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund against funding shortfalls and processing delays and support the addition of newly recognized health challenges to the program's certified list.
- Stand with every union whose members are suffering from 9/11-related illnesses, and back efforts in bargaining, advocacy, and administrative rule-making to win expansions of care.
- Demand worker-centered disaster policy reflective of September 11th's lessons; in crises, frontline workers need hazard protections and pay, presumptive disability coverage, and union representation in the room where and when decisions about health and safety are made.
- Ensure that workers involved in the rescue, recovery, and/or rebuilding efforts after a terrorist act, natural disaster, or other tragedy, as well as their families, do not have their health and well-being sacrificed for any reason, and that their protection remains the primary focus of any policy created in response.

The AFL-CIO therefore finally resolves that though these words may be forgotten, the acts of our nation's heroes will never be.

[SUBMITTED BY THE NEW YORK CITY CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL]