

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



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September 24, 2008

Dear Representative:

We are writing to urge your support for a legislative proposal developed by Speaker Pelosi's office and Representatives Maloney and Nadler that would address the health needs of thousands of World Trade Center (WTC) responders and residents who are now sick as a result of toxic exposures that resulted from the 9/11 attacks and their aftermath.

As you are well aware, the AFL-CIO, unions, and members of the New York delegation have been working hard to enact such legislation for years.

Over the past few weeks, intensive efforts have been underway, led by Speaker Pelosi's office, to craft legislation that would provide medical treatment and compensation for those who are sick with World Trade Center illnesses, and would be paid for by offsets as required under House pay-go rules. Based on those discussions, which have involved the unions, the contractors, New York City, Reps. Maloney, Nadler and Rangel, and key committee staff, the Speaker's office has developed a proposal that addresses health problems and litigation issues and is financially sound.

Specifically, the Speaker's 9/11 health proposal would do the following:

- Establish a federal health and compensation program for 9/11 responders and residents, at an estimated cost to the federal government of \$10.7 billion over the next 10 years. These costs would be offset as required under House pay-go rules since the program is an entitlement.
- Provide ongoing medical care to approximately 55,000 World Trade Center responders and 17,500 community members for 9/11 health conditions, and possibly more individuals if cost experience is less than the Congressional Budget Office's (CBO) cost estimate.

- Reopen the Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) for 30 years and limit the liability in litigation for New York City and the contractors to the amounts available under the captive insurance fund and their existing liability limits and insurance.
- Require a matching contribution by New York City of 15 percent for the health program, a contribution of approximately \$66 million/year. Workers' compensation payments made by the City for 9/11 conditions would be credited against this amount.

The AFL-CIO and unions strongly support this proposal. It would provide guaranteed medical care for those who are sick with WTC health conditions for the rest of their lives. It would help resolve nearly 10,000 lawsuits pending against New York City and the contractors by those who have been harmed, providing an alternative to litigation and quick compensation to those in need. While the proposal would require a contribution by New York City, this contribution is necessary for the program to succeed. Moreover, the vast majority of the federal contribution of \$10.7 billion would go directly to provide much needed services and programs for NYC firefighters, police, and other responders and NYC residents, the cost of which, in the absence of this legislation, would fall largely on the City.

Final plans for bringing this legislative proposal to the House floor are still being worked out, in conjunction with the scheduling of other critical legislation.

We urge you, as a member of the New York delegation, to support this leadership proposal to provide health care and compensation to those suffering from 9/11 health conditions, and to do all you can to see that this measure is brought before the House as quickly as possible before Congress adjourns.

Sincerely,

AFL-CIO
Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO
Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO
New York State, AFL-CIO
American Federation of Teachers
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
International Association of Fire Fighters
International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers
International Union of Painters and Allied Trades
United Auto Workers