

Honorable JACKIE SPEIER, Member of Congress:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Washington, DC, March 4, 2019.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: This is to notify you formally, pursuant to Rule VIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, that I have been served with a subpoena for testimony issued by the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of San Mateo, in a criminal proceeding involving an alleged threat of violence against our office personnel.

After Consultation with the Office of General Counsel, I have determined that compliance with the subpoena is consistent with privileges and rights of the House.

Sincerely,

SERA ALPTEKIN,
Caseworker & Field Representative.

NEVER FORGET THE HEROES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the topic of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today alongside Mr. ROSE, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. NADLER, Mr. KING of New York, and others, to urge the immediate passage of the Never Forget the Heroes Act, introduced by Representatives CAROLYN MALONEY, NADLER, and KING, which would fully fund and extend the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund authorization through 2090.

Representatives MALONEY, NADLER, and PETER KING have been stalwart advocates of this effort fighting on behalf of 9/11 victims and their families since the beginning, and it is thanks to their leadership that we passed the Zadroga Act, creating the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund and why we are still here fighting today.

I can't thank enough and praise enough the leadership of Representatives MALONEY, NADLER, and KING on this very important issue on behalf of the victims of September 11.

James Zadroga was one of those fearless leaders who rose up on 9/11. He was also the first NYPD officer whose death in 2006 was connected to toxic exposure at the World Trade Center site. The James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act was later signed into law in 2011 to help our 9/11 first responders.

Madam Speaker, 5 years later, the Zadroga Act was permanently reauthorized and included \$4.6 billion for the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund

over 5 years, which was established to provide compensation for the victims of 9/11 and their families, and it continues to provide compensation for those suffering from 9/11-related illnesses decades later and their loved ones.

First responders who worked on the pile day and night aiding in the search, rescue, and cleanup efforts were breathing toxic debris and ash that are now known to have caused over 50 different types of cancer. However, last month, the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund issued an alarming report, which stated its funding was insufficient to compensate all claims, and the fund would have to make severe cuts to awards across the board.

This is unacceptable. And regardless of party affiliation, regardless of which district or State you come from, it is imperative that this legislation is passed and sent to the President immediately to become law so we can ensure these victims receive the compensation they deserve.

This isn't a one-off issue. This isn't just a New York issue. This isn't a Democratic or Republican Party platform or political football. This is a responsibility we all shoulder as Americans, first and foremost. It is the spirit of our Nation, and it is who we are as a people.

It is important to remember that 9/11 first responders live not only in New York, but in 433 out of 435 congressional districts across this country.

These were the very men and women who, in the face of evil, were willing to put it all on the line to help save their fellow Americans, who ran into the towers as everyone else ran out. It is unconscionable that time and again they have been forced to plead their case as to why they are worthy of our support.

People who came down when the Zadroga Act was first getting authorized—sick—weren't there to fight in 2015 when it was permanently reauthorized because they had passed away due to their injuries.

People who were here in 2015 when that fight was made for the Zadroga Act to be permanently reauthorized are not here today to fight for the Victim Compensation Fund because they passed away and succumbed to their injuries.

We should not make them take dozens of trips down here to Washington, D.C., begging for support. Let them stay where they are and take care of their health. That is most important.

It is so important that we immediately passed the Never Forget the Heroes Act, which will ensure these heroes receive the support they have more than earned.

This past September 11, 17 years since the attacks, we came together, as we always do, to remember those who were taken from us that day. But this year marked an especially harrowing occasion. By the end of 2018, more people had died from 9/11-related illnesses than were killed on September 11.

Tonight, we are going to hear from the authors of the Never Forget the Heroes Act, Representatives CAROLYN MALONEY, PETER KING, and JERRY NADLER, and so many others from both sides of the aisle, on why this legislation is important for the victims of 9/11, for their communities, and for our Nation.

In addition to those who are joining us this evening, there are also so many activists and outside organizations fighting on behalf of 9/11 victims and working to ensure they receive full compensation: Jon Stewart, who has traveled to Washington countless times to fight for them and was just here last week; John Feal, from my district, and the FealGood Foundation; and so many more, including the great advocates from organized labor, especially law enforcement and first responders in New York and nationwide.

From everyday men and women in my district to us on the floor of the House of Representatives, it is up to each and every one of us to never forget the men and women whom we lost that day, those whom we have lost since, those suffering from 9/11-related illnesses, and their families.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY), a fellow New Yorker who has been a stalwart champion of this legislation going all the way back to the passage of the Zadroga Act.

I know our 9/11 first responders, their families, those suffering from 9/11-related illnesses, and all those affected by this dark moment in our Nation's history are so grateful to Mrs. MALONEY for her tireless work on behalf of them.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN), my friend and colleague, for initiating this Special Order and for bringing us together to speak out in support for the bipartisan Never Forget the Heroes Act, which we must pass in this Congress.

On September 11, 2011, we lost 2,997 people. But the death tolls from 9/11 may be far higher. It seems like every week I hear about the passing of another first responder and survivor. Soon the deaths from 9/11-related illnesses may outnumber those lost on that horrific day.

Thousands more are living with the effects of 9/11, with chronic diseases, with cancer, with a whole host of other 9/11-related illnesses.

Over 10,000 responders and survivors have been certified as having 9/11-related cancers. These are the men and women who rushed in and spent months combing through the wreckage. They are the residents and the workers who were told by the Federal Government, they were told that the air they were breathing was safe when, in fact, it was filled with toxic pollutants.

They are firefighters, police officers, Federal and local law enforcement,

medical workers, construction workers, and other heroes. All of them are victims of 9/11 as well.

The 9/11 attacks caused one of the biggest public health crises our country has ever faced. And those aren't just my constituents. They aren't just from New York or New Jersey. They are Americans.

We were attacked because we were a site of economic strength in America. Then they attacked our Pentagon, a symbol of the strength of our military. And then they were coming to the Capitol, a symbol of strength of our democracy.

These people live in every single State. We documented, and the GAO documented, 434 of the 435 congressional districts had someone who was harmed by 9/11.

Our whole country owes them a debt. On 9/11 we counted on them, and in return, we made a promise never to forget.

This needs to be more than a slogan and more than a bumper sticker. It is our sacred duty to make sure that they get the support they so justly deserve.

In 2010, after years of tireless effort, Congress reaffirmed its commitment to never forget the sacrifices made on September 11 by passing the bipartisan James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act.

We established the World Trade Center Health Program and the Nationwide Provider Network and reopened the Victim Compensation Fund to provide the thousands of injured and ill 9/11 responders and survivors with medical treatment for 9/11 health-related conditions and economic compensation for losses resulting from the attack.

In 2015, we permanently authorized the World Trade Center Health Program and reauthorized the Victim Compensation Fund until 2020.

So now we need to get to work again. The problem is bigger than expected. The number of cancer cases has jumped.

Cancer claims now account for one-third of claims—up from one-fifth just a few years ago. Death rates have gone up.

This January saw a 235 percent surge in death claims to the Victim Compensation Fund compared to the end of 2015, most of which are the result of cancers.

More and more 9/11 first responders and survivors are in need of the Victim Compensation Fund. Increased enrollment has led to a need for more funding. And in February, the special master of the September 11 Victim Compensation Fund announced that the fund was running out of money and would have to cut compensation awards by 50 percent to 70 percent because of budget shortfalls. These cuts went into effect on February 25, and have already devastated first responders, survivors, and their families.

This is unacceptable. We cannot let this stand, and we won't.

Last week, with my colleagues, Representatives NADLER, KING, and I intro-

duced the Never Forget the Heroes Act. Already, we have an unprecedented 150 cosponsors in 1 week. This was a joint effort, along with Congressman ZELDIN, Congressman ROSE, Congressman GOTTHEIMER, and many others.

Our bill will restore any cuts to awards, ensure that future eligible recipients are fully compensated, and make the Victim Compensation Fund a permanent program for the lives of the recipients.

We promised sick and injured 9/11 first responders and survivors that we would fully compensate them for the losses they have suffered. They shouldn't have to come begging for us to do our job, come begging back over and over again to Congress.

For some, 9/11 is a distant memory. For them, they remember this and 9/11 with every breath, with every cough, with every doctor's appointment, and with every death in their families.

They are counting on us. They are counting on Congress, just like we counted on them on that terrible day and in the weeks afterwards.

Never Forget is a promise. I urge my colleagues to join us in ensuring that we honor it.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN), my distinguished colleague, for organizing this important remembrance.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to maintain proper decorum in the Chamber.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mrs. MALONEY really inspires us all. And when she said that these 9/11 victims, their families are counting on us, they certainly know that they can count on her.

So I thank Congresswoman MALONEY for leading this effort for so many years. She has been a great champion in this cause, and it is great to assist her however I can. That is why Congressman ROSE and I wanted to be here cosponsoring this Special Order on a bipartisan basis to support Congresswoman MALONEY, Congressman NADLER, and Congressman KING, who have been the champions of this effort.

□ 2000

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman ZELDIN, Congressman ROSE, and Congressman GOTTHEIMER for really helping to achieve the 150 cosponsors that we have.

I have asked, and the gentleman has joined me in asking, Chairman NADLER to schedule hearings as quickly as possible. We hope to continue getting cosponsors. Hopefully, we will get everyone in this body to make a firm statement in support of the survivors and the heroes.

I thank the gentleman and others so much for all that they have been doing.

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her comments.

Madam Speaker, next, I am going to yield to my friend from New Jersey (JOSH GOTTHEIMER), who is really a leader in so many different forms. He co-chairs the Problem Solvers Caucus. If I had to make a pitch for the bill that should be at the top of the list for every caucus—there are many caucuses here in this Chamber—this should be an important priority, if not number one on the list, but I would put a pitch in for number one. He is a great Member, and I have a lot of respect for him.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GOTTHEIMER).

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Madam Speaker, I am thankful to be able to speak on behalf of this important bipartisan legislation.

Madam Speaker, I ask that Mrs. MALONEY keep that jacket on, so we can remember the importance of our firefighters who ran into those buildings. That is excellent. I thank Mr. ZELDIN for his leadership and his friendship, and I am really grateful. I thank Mr. ROSE for his leadership as well.

On 9/11, as we all know, our first responders ran directly into danger when others ran out. Just like we should always stand by our veterans and Active Duty, we are here today because we must continue to get the backs of all first responders and others who get our backs every day, especially those who stood up to the terrorists that morning and ran into the burning buildings on 9/11 and in the weeks that followed.

They are heroes and need our help. On 9/11, our world changed in an instant. Hundreds of Jersey cops and New York law enforcement, firefighters, EMTs, and others from around the country answered the call of duty and rushed toward the pile, some staying there for weeks.

If you ask how they were able to summon the courage that day, they will tell you that they were simply doing their job. Our Nation has an obligation to do everything in our power to take care of our first responders and survivors of those horrific attacks by terrorists on American soil.

Now, too many first responders are suffering from serious illnesses and cancers from exposure to harmful toxins, smoke, and debris from the pile. We lost thousands that day and have lost thousands since because of those effects. In fact, during those first few days, many didn't even wear a mask or an appropriate mask. They were told that they would be fine.

Congress set up the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund to help cover and compensate for 9/11 injuries, lost earnings, benefits, and out-of-pocket medical expenses. Many of those who were exposed back in 2001 are, sadly, first developing symptoms now, and still are. There just aren't enough allocated resources to cover all those who have suffered.

As a result, the special master of the fund recently announced that injured

and ill 9/11 first responders and survivors would receive cuts of 50 or 70 percent of their benefits that they were promised, that their families could count on, that their children could count on.

That is absolutely unacceptable. We can't leave law enforcement and first responders with brain tumors and end-stage lung disease by the wayside.

It is heartbreaking to hear their stories, and I heard so many earlier this week in New Jersey when we got together. They talked about how there are hundreds of first responders and volunteers still going through the Mount Sinai monitoring program, hoping for the best, but expecting the worst. It is in the back of the minds of all those who were there that day: When will I be diagnosed? Will it be too late? What will happen to my children and my family?

As of earlier this year, more than 47,000 claims have been filed with the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund and more than 11,000 additional claims are expected by 2020 when the fund is set to expire unless Congress acts. We must do the right thing by our first responders once and for all. No excuses.

That is why I am very proud to be an original cosponsor of this bipartisan legislation, the Never Forget the Heroes Act, to fully fund the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund so that no 9/11 survivor has to ever worry.

As Mr. ZELDIN said, there is nothing partisan about this. The bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus just talked about it this morning, how important it is, including Mr. ROSE.

This is a fight where we have had many champions, from Jon Stewart to Congresswoman MALONEY to Congressman KING, and I am grateful to all of them. Representatives NADLER, ZELDIN, ROSE, FITZPATRICK, SHERRILL, and SMITH, I thank all these Members for coming together in this bipartisan fight. Again, this was an attack on American soil by terrorists.

I thank all the families and all our first responders for their incredible service to our great country.

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman GOTTHEIMER for his words and his leadership with what is a bipartisan caucus here in the House of Representatives where people from all across the entire country come together. As the name of the caucus says, you just want to solve problems. You want to make your time here in Congress worthwhile. You want to be able to go back to the voters 2 years later and say this is what I did during my term, and have something positive, productive, and constructive to show for it.

The fact that the gentleman dedicates so much of his energy toward solving problems, building bridges, and bipartisanship is to be commended. I thank the gentleman for who he is, and for his efforts here on the floor tonight.

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Speaker, next, I get to introduce an amazing colleague

who was here in the Chamber, a Member of Congress, during the attacks on September 11. He was here in the days afterward, the years when the Zadroga Act was still getting passed and reauthorized, and here now during this fight for the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund.

He has been there every single step of the way since day one, and he is really an amazing Member of Congress and leader, really on the global stage. I just got back from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and he is leaving his mark on human trafficking and other issues around the globe.

At this time, on this really important issue tonight, I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. ZELDIN for his leadership, not just tonight, but it has been ongoing and very effective. I thank CAROLYN MALONEY for her prime sponsorship of this important legislation.

I am very proud to be a Never Forget the Heroes cosponsor, along with another very strong group of bipartisan Members who will not let this opportunity to enact this legislation pass. We will get this done.

Madam Speaker, everyone remembers where they were and what they were doing. I was actually chairing a Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing when a group of cowards hijacked four airliners in order to perpetrate the worst act of terrorism in American history.

Nearly 3,000 innocent people lost their lives that day, including 700 from my State. Who can forget the courageous first responders running up the stairs of the burning buildings with total disregard for their own safety, saving others at the expense of their own lives.

No one remembers the shock, horror, and numbing sorrow of this day, however, more than the families and the close friends of the victims. I have worked with and befriended many family members of 9/11 victims, and I can state unequivocally that there would not have been a 9/11 Commission and other historic policy initiatives without their extraordinary tenacity, commitment, and courage. That includes what was known as the four Jersey girls, widows who simply would not take "no" for an answer. They were a driving force behind the establishment of that very important historic commission.

I got to know a lot of the others. I actually hired a school principal who lost her husband, Alan, in 9/11, and I am reminded every time I am in the district office, and other days as well, what she has lost and how painful and how sorrowful that was on that day.

For more than 17 years, the families and the friends of those who died have had to endure their loss and a broken heart. Now we know the carnage, the consequences, the ongoing loss of life, and the health crisis attributable to 9/

11 are even worse than anyone could have imagined. New cases of 9/11-caused conditions are being diagnosed by the doctors at the World Trade Center Health Program every day, with close to 12,000 cases of 9/11-caused cancers diagnosed so far, including 600 cases with breast cancer, 2,400 with prostate cancer, 600 with thyroid cancer, 500 with lung cancer, and 500 with kidney cancer.

There have also been other kinds of catastrophic consequences, with people who are suffering from PTSD, some 9,000 so far and counting.

Congress enacted the World Trade Center Health Program Fund and September 11th Victim Compensation Fund to provide health services for responders at the three crash sites, and others in the vicinity of the World Trade Center site for health conditions related to toxic exposures from the attacks.

There are over 6,800 New Jerseyans receiving healthcare services from the World Trade Center Health Program, 1,200 of whom are from my district, constituents of mine.

Just last month—and this was shocking, frankly—the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund special master announced that, due to a lack of funding, the Justice Department will have to cut awards on pending cases by 50 percent and any new claims that are filed by 70 percent.

These cuts will devastate the first responders, our firemen, police, and emergency personnel. They will also represent a gross injustice for survivors and their families who spent countless hours and days in search of their loved ones.

I remember going to the site a couple of days after. I went with Tony Principi, who was then the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Unfortunately, there was a sense, a falsely conveyed sense, that maybe you didn't have to wear the mask, so many of those guys and those ladies on the ground were breathing in a toxic mix of chemicals that now have manifested into very serious disease.

This is an important bill. It is bipartisan, and again, I thank the gentleman (Mr. ZELDIN) for bringing us all together tonight, my colleagues on both sides of the aisle; Congresswoman MALONEY for her leadership; and of course, all the others who are cosponsors of this bill.

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman SMITH for his words tonight and pointing out that special master's report that just came out, which really stresses the urgency to get this done immediately. That is tough and unacceptable news for all those victims to read that report, and for the advocates, so I thank the gentleman for his leadership.

Congressman SMITH from New Jersey is fighting hard on behalf of his constituents on this issue and for all 9/11 families.

Tonight's Special Order, I just asked Kevin from my team here to see—it

might be a fun fact as to when was the last time that there was a bipartisan Special Order in the Chamber. I don't know, is this even a first?

I am leading tonight's event with Congressman MAX ROSE of Staten Island, who is our next speaker. Congressman ROSE is a freshman who was elected to represent a great congressional district in New York. I represent the greatest congressional district in New York.

Staten Island, I know, is a pretty special place as well, and Congressman MAX ROSE is a military veteran. I have a tremendous amount of respect for him, for his military service.

Right after World War II, almost 100 percent of the House was made up of military veterans. Right after Vietnam, it was a little over 75 percent. I think it was about 77 percent right after Vietnam. Now the number is less than 1 in 5. We have to get that number up. Republicans, Democrats, conservatives, liberals, anywhere you are in the 50 States, it is good to have more vets here in Congress. I thank the gentleman for running, for serving, and for co-leading tonight's Special Order.

The gentleman contacted me as soon as he was elected after the November election to talk about different ways that we can work together, and it is great that our bipartisan Special Order here tonight is for this particular cause. It is an honor to lead tonight with him.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ROSE), the freshman Congressman from Staten Island.

Mr. ROSE of New York. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. ZELDIN for his kind words. The honor is all mine, from one post-9/11 veteran to another post-9/11 veteran, from Staten Island or Long Island. I truly respect your service as well to our great country and applaud the gentleman for putting the country first ahead of any other political considerations as we try to do what is right here.

I would also like to, of course, thank the other original cosponsors of this bill, people who have fought for this incredibly important project and initiative for more than a decade, CAROLYN MALONEY, JERRY NADLER, and PETE KING.

I wanted to start off by telling a story of one of my constituents, Rob Serra. Rob graduated from the academy on September 10, 2001. His first day on the job with the New York City Fire Department was 9/11. When he saw the burning towers from the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, he did exactly what first responders across the city and across the country did without hesitation, and that is, he raced to the scene. He raced right to danger.

For weeks, he joined so many in digging through the rubble, looking for survivors, looking for their friends, looking for those who were not as fortunate. Dust loaded with cement, asbestos, lead, glass fibers, and other

chemicals caked to his face. He knew this would probably kill him, but he served without question because it was the right thing to do.

Rob is a young man, but he is now in a wheelchair, retired from the FDNY before he could even truly begin his career. He is not looking for handouts. He is looking for respect, for acknowledgment, and for his government to just do the right damn thing, not just for him and for his family, because he is already covered, but he knows there are thousands of heroic Americans just like him across the country who are getting sick but facing drastic cuts to their benefits.

Just about every Member in this body has a constituent like Rob and his family. They all deserve more than our tweets and statements. They need action. They deserve nothing less because we need to do more than just say, "Never forget." We need to do more than just shake somebody's hand and say that we have a picture of the Twin Towers in our office or that we decided to serve in this body because of 9/11.

We need to make sure that these heroes are never forgotten and are always taken care of. That means making sure every victim and their families get the benefits and care they deserve, because this wasn't an attack on New York. This was an attack on the United States of America.

Keeping our promise to these heroes is not a New York problem. It is an American issue that we have to address and fix as a country. There are VCF claims from all 50 States and 99 percent of congressional districts. In a few years, we may face the tragic fact that more people will have died from 9/11-related injuries and diseases than were lost on the day of the attacks.

Each and every person that dies is yet another victim of al-Qaida's attack. Unless Congress acts to fully and permanently fund the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, benefits will be cut and promises will be broken. This isn't due to mismanagement or fraud or any other fact than that more people are getting sick.

I applaud this administration for doing the right thing and effectively managing this program. I applaud the President for that. But it is unacceptable that we will not adequately fund it, and I won't stand for it. I am hopeful we can get this done, because we truly have no other choice.

□ 2015

Mr. ZELDIN. I didn't realize Congressman ROSE is a Purple Heart too.

Mr. ROSE of New York. I was in the wrong place at the wrong time for that one.

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his service in the military and for his new service he just started here in the House. I had to throw in the Army, too, knowing that we do have another speaker here who is a Navy helicopter pilot, if I understand correctly. We have got a couple of

Army folks in the House. I thank the gentleman for his service to our country going back many years, even though he just started here in the House 2 years ago.

Mr. ROSE of New York. Absolutely, I thank the gentleman. Go Army.

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Speaker, our next speaker tonight also had a distinguished career serving in government before joining Congress. He rose up the ranks at the FBI. He is a very well-respected member of the FBI who believes in law enforcement and the rule of law. He also loves our military so much that over the course of years, every single year for Christmas we have been able to travel to Iraq or Afghanistan, going to the Middle East, to visit the troops as we did this past Christmas, all over Kuwait on Christmas Day.

The FBI was impacted greatly on 9/11. They went into the towers as well while many people were running out. So I thank Brian, not only for his service with the FBI, but for his continued fight for all of those first responders, as we should remember those FDNY and the NYPD who went in to the towers. There were many other types of law enforcement who ran in as well, including many FBI agents.

On behalf of all those FBI agents, I thank the gentleman for continuing the fight. It is great to have another State Representative from Pennsylvania.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues from New York, LEE ZELDIN, Mr. ROSE, Mr. KING, Mrs. MALONEY, and Mr. NADLER, for holding this Special Order tonight. I am proud to join my colleagues in this fight to reauthorize the September 11 Victim Compensation Fund to ensure that our 9/11 survivors and their families have the resources and the support to which they are owed.

As my colleagues can attest, we lost some amazing human beings on that day: firefighters, police officers, EMTs, medics, mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters.

Victor Saracini, a resident of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, a constituent in my district, was the captain and pilot of United Airlines Flight 175 which our entire country and the entire world witnessed fly into the south tower.

While 9/11 shattered many preconceived notions we have had, it strengthened our collective American identity. Our Nation emerged from that day stronger because of the bravery and selflessness of the heroes who risked and, in many cases, lost their lives to save people they didn't know and had never met.

Their sacrifice has come at a tremendous cost. In over 17 years since that fateful day, nearly 10,000 people have suffered from cancers induced by breathing in toxic dust at Ground Zero, dust that included thousands of contaminants, including lead and mercury.

Madam Speaker, in just one statistic on how this problem is still prevalent, the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial reported that 15 police officers died in 2018 from 9/11-related illnesses, 15 just last year alone. This problem is pervasive, and this problem is persistent. It is incumbent upon the Federal Government to stand up and defend those who defended us. The September 11 Victim Compensation Fund must be reauthorized immediately. It is a moral obligation of this body. It simply cannot wait.

Again, I want to thank the members of the New York delegation for holding this Special Order and for giving me the opportunity to express my gratitude for the heroes and their families and the need to reauthorize this fund. I second my colleagues' sentiment tonight. This is a moral obligation of this House. We must get this done, and we must get it done immediately.

I want to thank Mr. ZELDIN for representing the Problem Solvers Caucus tonight. In recognizing JOSH GOTTHEIMER, I wanted to say to my colleague, MAX ROSE and I are going to be testing a new rule that we put into place, and we are going to get to 290 cosponsors come hell or high water. We will get there which will force that matter on to this floor. It will pass. It will pass overwhelmingly, and we will get this done for the 9/11 victims and their families.

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman FITZPATRICK for setting his goals with cosponsorship not just high but also appropriately. Every Member of this Chamber should be cosponsoring this bill so, hopefully, we will get those numbers up a lot, but much credit to Congresswoman MALONEY, to Congressman NADLER, and to Congressman KING, for the advocates from the outside, especially across the New York City metropolitan area, we are already starting strong with 150 cosponsors.

The next speaker is a United States Naval Academy graduate. She was a helicopter pilot. She is a new Representative from New Jersey's 11th District, and she is hitting the ground running with important leadership on this issue fighting for her constituents. There is a story to be told to Members of Congress who maybe weren't here in 2015 or even 5 years before that when Congressman NADLER, whom we will be hearing from next, was getting the Zadroga Act first passed, a lot of Members were new in 2015 when we were permanently reauthorizing the Zadroga Act. Now, if you look back to 2015, we have a lot of new Members who weren't here in 2015. The education, as we talk to people who live far away from where we live in New York and New Jersey, they might not even know what the Zadroga Act is. They might not know what the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund is. That is why it is great to see Congressman ROSE and Congresswoman SHERRILL leading the fight to educate their fellow freshman and others to

make sure that they cosponsor this effort.

I thank the gentlewoman for her service. I kind of apologize for my Go Army joke before. I won't mention the three-game winning streak that MAX and I have going. Hopefully that didn't bring the gentlewoman down too much before we hear her great remarks tonight.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Ms. SHERRILL).

Ms. SHERRILL. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York, as I like to call it the suburbs of northern Jersey.

But as my colleagues before me have made clear, this Congress must honor the first responders and survivors of 9/11 and make the September 11 Victim Compensation Fund permanent.

For 8 months and 19 days after September 11, police officers, firefighters, first responders, FBI agents, and Federal officers from across the country came together in New York. In a gesture of national unity that we have not forgotten, they stayed, sometimes far away from home, to help.

Firefighters like Gerry Lynch from the Bloomfield Fire Department in my district. Gerry and the Bloomfield firefighters were assigned to help Ladder 105 Engine 219 in Brooklyn because they were at Ground Zero looking for their brothers. After being told that they could go home to Jersey, Gerry didn't think twice about what he would do next. He went down to help on the bucket brigades at Ground Zero working with men and women on the line.

Madam Speaker, we now know that first responders, as well as students, residents, workers, and business owners of Lower Manhattan were exposed to toxic fumes in the aftermath of the attack. What some have called a toxic soup of mercury, dust, silica, lead, fiberglass, benzene, and many other substances, were pulverized and released into the air. These victims have developed cancers, pulmonary disease, respiratory disease, and sleep apnea, among many other ailments.

Those suffering from 9/11-related illnesses include Mike, a firefighter from New Jersey, who lugged, by hand, the equipment that his firefighters brought from New Jersey into Ground Zero. Mike worked from 7 a.m. through the next morning, and by the time he was finished, he was so exhausted that a human chain had to carry him off the pile. His feet never hit the ground.

Mike told me that a lot of firefighters, including himself, didn't want to come forward. They didn't want to admit that they might need help. But luckily for him, his captain made sure that they went forward for monitoring, and so he started that in 2004. Since 9/11, Mike has developed breathing problems, sleep apnea, and precancerous cells. He asked me to let people know how hard the firefighters worked for us and that we need to do whatever we can for those who have fallen sick.

Madam Speaker, we are here tonight to let Mike and all those suffering know that we consider it our responsibility and our duty to get this done. We established the victim compensation fund in 2011 to provide care for Mike and all those suffering from health issues after 9/11.

There are 8,614 New Jerseyans who have registered for the victim compensation fund, and nearly 4,000 have submitted claim forms. That is 500 residents in my district alone. If anyone thinks this is just a New York-New Jersey issue, consider that the victim compensation fund helps Americans from 434 out of 435 congressional districts.

The fund is running out, Madam Speaker. As my colleagues said, benefits are being slashed by 70 percent and thousands of claims go unpaid. To let the fund go broke or give another temporary extension and force our heroes and their families to worry about the rug being pulled out from under them is simply unacceptable. It is embarrassing that we would have to fight for this, that people who are ill cannot concentrate solely on getting the treatment they need or seeing the right doctors.

Firefighters like Mike and Gerry were the ones who didn't run away from the crisis, but ran right into it. People who have displayed this bravery and courage need to be taken care of. They should not be made to feel guilty that they are asking for help when they have medical issues related to their service.

Madam Speaker, I believe in this country. I believe in our values and that as a Nation we know that when we step up and when we take care of our own, we are helping those people to whom we owe the most to. We need to give these first responders and survivors the peace of mind that their sacrifice for this country is recognized and valued by the rest of America. I call upon each and every Member of this Congress to join us and to make the September 11 Victim Compensation Fund permanent.

Go Navy.

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Speaker, I will get back to the gentlewoman in December on that one. We will see if we keep the winning streak going.

I thank the gentlewoman again for her service, for her remarks tonight, and for running for office. I look forward to working with the gentlewoman on this.

The next speaker certainly needs no introduction. He is last but certainly not least, someone who has been a rock solid presence, a voice, a leader, a fierce advocate for all 9/11 victims and their families, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, and someone who is not just one of the main three who have been leading this effort with Congresswoman MALONEY and Congressman KING, but really right back to the very beginning, since September 11, 2001, so personally on behalf

of my constituents back home on the east end of Long Island, for all 9/11 victims, their families, thank you to Chairman NADLER for his leadership.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER), who is the chair of the House Judiciary Committee.

□ 2030

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I thank Mr. ZELDIN and Mr. ROSE for holding this Special Order hour on the importance of reauthorizing the Victim Compensation Fund and ensuring that every responder and survivor is made whole, as Congress intended.

As my colleagues have also discussed, we have been pushing for more than 15 years to finally address the moral obligations we have to those made ill by exposure to toxins on September 11 and in the weeks and months after the attack. It is a two-part moral obligation.

First, the attacks on September 11 were not just attacks on New York or on Washington, D.C. They were attacks on America.

In the last few weeks, we have heard an objection raised to this bill that New York should handle this issue because it is a "New York problem."

The World Trade Center stood in my district. Many of the people who ran into those towers were my fellow New Yorkers. The people who fled their homes and offices to find safety were my constituents.

But they were Americans, and those towers fell on that Tuesday morning not because they stood in New York, but because they stood in the United States of America.

While it may have been the brave men and women of the Fire Department of New York and the New York Police Department and the Port Authority who first rushed to those towers, to say that the responders and survivors who are sick today are just in New York is factually untrue.

There are sick responders and survivors in every State and in 434 of the 435 congressional districts. This is not a New York or a D.C. issue; it is a national issue and deserves a national response.

The second moral obligation directly ties the Victim Compensation Fund to the Federal Government.

The reason so many survivors and responders were exposed to the toxins that made them sick was that they were told by the Federal Government—specifically, by Christine Todd Whitman, then the Administrator of the Federal EPA, and then by Mayor Rudy Giuliani—that the air at Ground Zero and in Lower Manhattan was safe to breathe, that they should work for months to clean up the pile, that they should go back to work in Lower Manhattan, that the air was safe to breathe.

But it was not safe; it was toxic.

In the rush to get Wall Street up and running, tens of thousands of people were sent directly into harm's way by the Federal Government.

I went to Ground Zero days after the attack. We knew even then that the air was not safe, that the air was thick with dust and debris, and we had no idea what was swirling in those clouds around us as we struggled to breathe. But the Federal Government said it was safe.

I think of those responders, first on the rescue mission. And I don't begrudge anybody who worked on the pile in the first 3 days when people may have still been alive who worked without proper respiratory protection to save lives. But after the first 3 days, it was a recovery mission; and people worked, breathing that air, for hours and days without adequate protection.

I think of the families sent back to their apartments in Lower Manhattan and told to wipe away the layers of asbestos from their furniture and their windows with a damp cloth.

I think of the students sitting in their classrooms at Stuyvesant High School, blocks from Ground Zero, and the barges removing debris as trucks full of asbestos idled below the high school's open windows.

The Federal Government bears the burden to care for and support all those who went back to Ground Zero because the Federal Government told them it was safe when it was not safe.

And since the day the EPA and others told people it was safe to go back to work, to school, and to their homes, since the day the EPA told those responders at Ground Zero that it was safe to work with minimal protection, I have been fighting alongside my colleagues Mrs. MALONEY and Mr. KING to secure healthcare and support for the people who became sick because of that exposure.

We fought for nearly 10 years to get the first Zadroga Act passed in 2010. That bill created the World Trade Center Health Program and reopened the Victim Compensation Fund.

But we only authorized the VCF for 5 years. We knew we needed more than 5 years, and we came back in 2015 and passed the reauthorization bill.

That bill made the health program permanent—or, at least, until 2090—which gave much-needed certainty to those suffering from 9/11 illnesses and their families. But, again, we authorized the Victim Compensation Fund, the VCF, for just another 5 years.

As those 5 years have gone on, people have become sicker. More and more responders and survivors have been diagnosed with various cancers, particularly cancers with long latency periods, and, tragically, more and more have died from those illnesses.

As people become sicker and pass away, the VCF has functioned exactly as Congress directed. It has provided those individuals, those first responders, those survivors, and their families with compensation and resources they need to get through these difficult times.

But, just as people are getting sicker, the VCF is running out of money. Last

month, the Justice Department announced that, because of the high demand for claims, because the cancers are more numerous than anticipated, because more people of the heroes of 9/11 than anticipated are getting sick, the Department would be forced to cut awards by 50 percent if they were filed by February 1 and 70 percent if they were filed after February 1.

Can you imagine that? You are dying of stomach cancer, unable to work, unable to leave your house for more than your doctor's appointments, and waiting for compensation so you can pay off your house and protect your family before you die, and the award you anticipated is cut in half or by 70 percent.

Your wife dies after a long struggle with breast cancer, and you are waiting for your claim to pay her funeral expenses, and your compensation is cut in half or by 70 percent.

You have such severe gastrointestinal issues that you can only work part-time. You are waiting for your award to pay for your child's college tuition, and your claim is cut by 70 percent.

That is not the promise we made to those first responders and survivors. That is not fulfilling the moral obligation that pushed us to create the VCF in the first place.

That is failing Lincoln's statement of our duty "to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan."

That is failing our promise to never forget 9/11 and failing the brave men and women who helped us on that day and who struggle and fight to this day.

But that doesn't have to happen. If we pass the Never Forget the Heroes Act, we can stop these cuts and make the Victim Compensation Fund permanent, providing responders and survivors the certainty that, no matter how sick they get, they will have us at their backs and the resources they need.

I thank my colleagues who have been with us in this fight from the start, and I thank the 142 bipartisan cosponsors who have already signed on to this bill.

We will get this done. We must get this done. We will meet our moral obligations.

We will never forget these heroes.

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman NADLER for his remarks tonight and for his leadership through the years. It is a very important voice from New York City, from Ground Zero, and something that couldn't have possibly impacted the heart of his district any more than what was the largest attack on our soil on September 11, 2001.

Yet the silver lining of that attack was seeing the spirit, the fight, the grit of his constituents, of my constituents, of constituents from 433 out of 435 districts in our entire country who responded after September 11, 2001.

A lot of Members of this Chamber don't realize that 9/11 first responders came from almost every single congressional district represented here.

But it was all throughout Chairman NADLER's district on September 11, 2001, that we saw people going into danger while everyone else was running out, and it reminded us of the strength of New Yorkers, the pride and strength and courage of Americans.

There has certainly been great sacrifice since but, most importantly, sacrifice from those who have been victims because of September 11, 2001, either due to the attack that day or service in our military.

As we are here tonight, there are 9/11 first responders who are very sick, and I just want to, right before we close, share one quick story.

This is a constituent of mine from East Hampton. This is a single mother, a sole provider of her 12-year-old son, who lived and worked within blocks of the World Trade Center on 9/11 and during the aftermath.

She said: "My colleagues and I saw it as our patriotic duty to show the terrorists that they could not destroy our neighborhood and way of life."

I think, many times, people forget that, in the aftermath of 9/11, we were not only tending to Ground Zero, but we were rebuilding the spirit of our Nation.

It is thanks to Americans like this constituent of mine and her coworkers and all those who faced the unconscionable horror, who did not cower in fear, that our Nation rose stronger than ever.

In late 2017, she was diagnosed with stage III ovarian cancer, which has never occurred on either side of her family.

Her coworker at the time of 9/11 developed prostate cancer, and three of her coworkers now have an extremely rare skin condition.

In response to learning that the fund is running out of money and would cut claims by 70 percent, she said: "I don't think I can properly express in writing how devastated I feel. Even worse, I feel extremely distraught over the others who are in the same situation as me or who are about to find they are . . . as they will, too, receive a devastating diagnosis like mine."

The one other story is Kevin from Smithtown. I represent a district that is just over 50 miles from Ground Zero, and fighting for my constituents who were affected by September 11 is my job, but it is also very personal.

Kevin is a former NYPD officer who said he "picked up human remains for 2 days, without any hesitation, because at the time that is what had to be done."

He continued to work on and around the pile for close to 12 months.

In January of 2018, Kevin was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's diffuse large B-cell lymphoma and underwent 6 months of chemotherapy, which left him with devastating symptoms that will stay with him the rest of his life.

He wrote to me about how he missed many important moments and family functions with his children and loved

ones. He said: "To give out awards reduced by 70 percent is a slap in my face and all others that are now suffering," and he is right.

When he was working the pile day and night for months on end, he wasn't thinking about himself or what this might mean for his future. He was thinking about our Nation. He was committed to getting the remains of victims of 9/11 home to those who survived them.

Kevin was there for us, and it is important for all of us to step up to the plate for him.

Lastly, I thank Congresswoman MALONEY, Congressman KING, and Chairman NADLER for taking the lead on this legislation yet again. I thank Congressman ROSE for coleading tonight's Special Order. Hopefully, it is the start of something new and that we will see more often: bipartisan Special Orders on the floor of the House of Representatives.

I think our constituents back home all across America want to see more of us working together to get good things done. It makes them feel good that their government is working for them.

But I will tell you, with regards to the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund, it is not until this Chamber, the Senate, and the President signs it that this is done, fully funded, that we are going to be able to take credit for anything good and right, because this needs to actually get over the finish line.

Tonight is just another positive step. Everyone signing on as cosponsors is a positive step. And I hope that everyone who is watching, whether you are a Member of this Chamber, you are a staffer of a Member of this Chamber, or you are an advocate, that you get involved, cosponsor, to get our numbers up.

I thank Madam Speaker for her leadership tonight with this effort, for presiding over the Chamber during this very important hour, and I yield back the balance of my time.

STATUS OF ABORTION IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Madam Speaker, today I would like to address the status of abortion in America.

In the past 2 months, there have been two stories that show a significant shift, I believe, in America regarding the status of abortion.

In New York, one of our original 13 Colonies, they recently expanded the right to have abortions up to 9 months and, as a practical matter, left it to be okay for a baby born alive not to receive protection. The Governor of New York was so proud of this situation that he lit up the World Trade Center and people applauded in the Senate chamber.

In Virginia, another one of our original 13 States, the Governor came out for a bill that also allows 9-month abortions. The morally bereft Governor said that, if a baby was born alive, that baby would only be resuscitated if the mother wanted.

By the way, I want to point out here there is this myth out there that late-term abortions are only for babies who may not survive.

I once heard a speech from a woman who quit a late-term abortion clinic in Ohio. She was there only one day. At that time, there were six babies delivered. Five had no health problems whatsoever, and the other had either spina bifida—I think it was spina bifida. And, of course, many people live productive lives with that disease.

Only 10 years ago, Kermit Gosnell of Philadelphia was convicted of delivering babies alive and killing them after they were born—perhaps hundreds, perhaps thousands.

□ 2045

You can read about them in a book by that name, "Gosnell." There is a movie out as well; kind of very interesting to see the mindset of the abortion industry.

But Gosnell was defiant. When they talked to him after he was convicted, as a practical matter, put in prison for life, he said, in the end, he would be vindicated. And I think when he said vindicated, he meant in 10 years that he felt America would come around to the position that it would be okay to kill a baby born alive.

Who would dream that less than 10 years later, Gosnell may be on the verge of being proven right, and that the moral compass of America had shifted so much that it would be okay to allow a born-alive baby to die.

How did we get here? There are a variety of culprits to blame. Part of it, of course, is the thinly disguised racism of our old friend, Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood. And I should point out that even Margaret Sanger, feminist hero, was opposed to abortion because as recently as 60 years ago, even among people of that ilk, that would have been considered something that you could never be for.

But she did want her organization to reduce people from races she considered inferior, and this was typical of the views of the early progressives.

We also have people viewing it also as a way to hold down the people that we consider undesirable.

Justice Ginsberg was quoted in the New York Times that she thought Roe was decided, in part, because of a concern about population growth in populations we don't want too many of. Now, she was subsequently allowed to say that that quote was taken out of context, but that was the quote that was listed. They kind of gave her a chance to try to walk that thing back; a chance that wasn't given STEVE KING.

Later, the same point was made by an article in the Harvard Journal crediting abortion with the reduction in crime rates.