

have \$733 billion. And now, all of a sudden, \$733 billion isn't just not the right number, "it is socialism," "it is destroying the world as we know it," "we can't support it." That is ridiculous. It is a partisan argument. It is what the minority does. But it has never been what we have done on this bill.

I believe in the bipartisanship of this committee. And as angry as I was, sitting there listening to the minority leader insult all of the people who have worked to make this bill bipartisan—and you can oppose it, that is fine—but to say that we don't care about national security, that we are a bunch of socialists who don't want to work with Republicans, is a bald-faced lie.

And the last statistic on that is the amendment thing—and I love this—we made more amendments in order on this defense bill this year than ever. The Republicans actually submitted a lot fewer amendments than we did. We submitted 480, they submitted 201. And then we actually agreed with the overwhelming majority of their amendments and put them in en bloc packages. They didn't agree with the overwhelming majority of our amendments, so we didn't put them in en bloc packages, which gives them the statistic that only one of their amendments was debated.

So by working with them and agreeing with them to include 50 percent of their amendments—the most amendments ever offered—that is partisan. And I can't help but feel like they were setting us up. They didn't want to work with us. No matter how hard we tried, no matter how many hours we spent working with them, they wanted to come to the floor today and say that Democrats don't care about national security.

That is shameful. I am going to get over it. We are going to work past it—I think national security is too important to get petty about these things—and we are going to keep working together.

The good news is that we have a very good bill. It is accountable. It doesn't just give the Pentagon money. Yes, we eliminate senseless discrimination by stopping the ban on transgender troops.

I will say the other side is wrong. They have voted against the defense bill before. They voted against it in 2010 because we repealed Don't Ask, Don't Tell. They were wrong then and they are wrong now. Discrimination in the military doesn't make us safer. Mindless bigotry doesn't make us safer.

I believe strongly in this bill. The good news is, we got this, we are going to pass it, even if the other side is going to decide to play partisan politics.

Madam Chair, I urge support for the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. POCAN. Madam Chair, I rise today in support of Amendment No. 439 which is

based upon legislation that I have introduced every Congress since I was elected in 2012, the "Restore Honor to Service Members Act".

This amendment will require the Department of Defense to correct the military records of service members discharged solely because of their sexual orientation. Importantly, amending service members' discharge characterizations to an honorable discharge will enable impacted individuals to access the benefits they earned and to which they would otherwise be entitled. It is a significant moment for the more than 100,000 Americans estimated to have been discharged from the military since World War II due to their sexual orientation.

I thank Chairman SMITH for his strong support of this amendment, Paul Arcangeli—Staff Director of the House Armed Services Committee—for his assistance, and Leslie Zelenko of my staff who has worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the amendment before us today.

Additionally, I would like to extend my deep gratitude to the Human Rights Campaign, the Modern Military Association of America, and VoteVets, for supporting this amendment, and Representatives KATIE HILL, CHRIS PAPPAS, MARK TAKANO, SETH MOULTON, JAMIE RASKIN, CHUY GARCIA, ALAN LOWENTHAL, BARBARA LEE, BILL FOSTER, BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN, ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, SEAN PATRICK MALONEY, BRIAN HIGGINS, ED CASE, PAUL TONKO, DENNY HECK, JAN SCHAKOWSKY, VERONICA ESCOBAR, ROBIN KELLY, JULIA BROWNLEY, KURT SCHRADER, STEVE COHEN, ILHAN OMAR, SHEILA JACKSON LEE, SUZAN DELBENE, ANTHONY BROWN, JOE KENNEDY, DONNA SHALALA, SUZANNE BONAMICI, and KATIE PORTER for cosponsoring. I would also like to recognize Senator BRIAN SCHATZ and Senator KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND for championing this legislation in the Senate. Without this outpouring of support, today would not have been possible. Again, I thank them.

Madam Chair, I urge all of my colleagues to support the Restore Honor amendment, and I urge a yes vote in favor of the en bloc amendment into which it has been packaged.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. SMITH).

The en bloc amendments were agreed to.

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Chair, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. MCCOLLUM) having assumed the chair, Mrs. DEMINGS, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2500) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2020 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair

will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

NEVER FORGET THE HEROES: JAMES ZADROGA, RAY PFEIFER, AND LUIS ALVAREZ PERMANENT AUTHORIZATION OF THE SEPTEMBER 11TH VICTIM COMPENSATION FUND ACT

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1327) to extend authorization for the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001 through fiscal year 2090, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H. R. 1327

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Never Forget the Heroes: James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act".

SEC. 2. SEPTEMBER 11TH VICTIM COMPENSATION FUND OF 2001.

(a) AUTHORIZATION AND FUNDING.—Section 410 of the Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act (49 U.S.C. 40101 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c), by striking "\$4,600,000,000" and all that follows through "expended" and inserting "such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019 and each fiscal year thereafter through fiscal year 2092, to remain available until expended"; and

(2) in subsection (e), by striking "Upon completion of all payments under this title" and inserting "On October 1, 2092, or at such time thereafter as all funds are expended".

(b) EXTENSION OF LIMITATION ON CLAIM FILING.—Section 405(a)(3)(B) of the Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act (40 U.S.C. 40101 note) is amended by striking "the date that is 5 years after the date of enactment of the James Zadroga 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund Reauthorization Act" and inserting "October 1, 2090".

(c) COMPENSATION REDUCED BY SPECIAL MASTER DUE TO LACK OF FUNDING.—Section 406(d)(2) of the Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act (49 U.S.C. 40101 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(D) COMPENSATION REDUCED BY SPECIAL MASTER DUE TO INSUFFICIENT FUNDING.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—In any claim in Group B as described in section 405(a)(3)(C)(iii) in which, prior to the enactment of the Never Forget the Heroes: James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act, the Special Master had advised the claimant that the amount of compensation has been reduced on the basis of insufficient funding, the Special Master shall, in the first fiscal year beginning after sufficient funding becomes available under such Act, pay to the claimant an amount that is, as determined by the Special Master, equal to the difference between—

"(I) the amount the claimant would have been paid under this title if sufficient funding was available to the Special Master at

the time the Special Master determined the amount due the claimant under this title; and

“(II) the amount the claimant was paid under this title.

“(ii) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subparagraph:

“(I) INSUFFICIENT FUNDING.—The term ‘insufficient funding’ means funding—

“(aa) that is available to the Special Master under section 410(c) on the day before the date of enactment of the Never Forget the Heroes: James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act for purposes of compensating claims in Group B as described in section 405(a)(3)(C)(iii); and

“(bb) that the Special Master determines is insufficient for purposes of compensating all such claims and complying with subparagraph (A).

“(II) SUFFICIENT FUNDING.—The term ‘sufficient funding’ means funding—

“(aa) made available to the Special Master for purposes of compensating claims in Group B as described in section 405(a)(3)(C)(iii) through an Act of Congress that is enacted after the date on which the amount of the claim described in clause (i) has been reduced; and

“(bb) that the Special Master determines is sufficient for purposes of compensating all claims in such Group B.”.

(d) LIMITATIONS ON NONECONOMIC LOSS.—Section 405(b)(7)(A) of the of the Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act (49 U.S.C. 40101 note) is amended—

(1) by redesignating clauses (i) and (ii) as subclauses (I) and (II) respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(2) by striking “With respect to” and inserting the following:

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (ii), with respect to”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(ii) EXCEPTION.—The Special Master may exceed the applicable limitation in clause (i) for a claim in Group B as described in subsection (a)(3)(C)(iii) if the Special Master determines that the claim presents special circumstances.”.

(e) ADJUSTMENT OF ANNUAL GROSS INCOME LIMITATION.—Section 405(b)(7)(B)(ii) of the Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act (40 U.S.C. 40101 note) is amended by striking “\$200,000.” and inserting “the annual gross income limitation. The annual gross income limitation in effect on the date of enactment of the Never Forget the Heroes: James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act is \$200,000. The Special Master shall periodically adjust that annual gross income limitation to account for inflation.”.

SEC. 3. APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL MASTER AND DEPUTY SPECIAL MASTERS.

Section 404 of the Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act (49 U.S.C. 40101 note) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (c); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (a) the following:

“(b) APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL MASTER AND DEPUTY SPECIAL MASTERS.—The Attorney General may appoint a Special Master and no more than two Deputy Special Masters without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service. Any such employee shall serve at the pleasure of the Attorney General. The Attorney General shall fix the annual salary of the Special Master and the Deputy Special Masters.”.

SEC. 4. BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

(a) STATUTORY PAYGO SCORECARDS.—The budgetary effects of this Act shall not be entered on either PAYGO scorecard maintained pursuant to section 4(d) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010.

(b) SENATE PAYGO SCORECARDS.—The budgetary effects of this Act shall not be entered on any PAYGO scorecard maintained for purposes of section 4106 of House Concurrent Resolution 71 (115th Congress).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, today, this body will, for what I hope is the final time, meet its moral obligation to provide for survivors and responders suffering from 9/11-related illnesses.

This obligation is two-fold.

First, on September 11, 2001, it was not just the city of New York and the Pentagon that were attacked, it was the entire country. A national attack has always required a national response. That is why responders from around the country rushed to New York to aid in the rescue and recovery effort in the immediate aftermath. Today, sick responders and survivors live in all 50 States. This is a national problem, and Congress must provide a national solution.

Second, tens of thousands of responders and survivors are sick because the Federal Government, in its rush to get Wall Street reopened, ignored the evidence and the expert opinions of scientists. The then-head of the Environmental Protection Agency repeatedly assured us that the air around the World Trade Center was “safe to breathe.” We knew it wasn’t, but the Federal Government kept insisting it was.

And, compounding the Federal Government’s culpability was its failure to conduct a comprehensive cleanup of the environmental disaster created when the World Trade Center towers collapsed. For example, the EPA administrator told the public that asbestos could be cleaned from apartments with a damp cloth and a wet mop.

Based on these false assurances, students were sent back to schools that had been contaminated with the toxic dust cloud without ventilation systems being cleaned first. People kept working to clear the pile for months with no protective equipment. Quite simply,

the Federal Government lied, and now tens of thousands of people are sick with 9/11-related illnesses. It now falls to us—in the words of Abraham Lincoln—“to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and for his orphan.”

Three times, Congress has come together to provide a health program and compensation for the victims of 9/11 through a victim compensation fund, or VCF. Most recently, in 2015, we made the World Trade Center Health Program effectively permanent, extended to 2090, but reauthorized the VCF, the victim compensation fund, for only 5 years.

As we heard in a Judiciary Committee hearing last month, a 5-year authorization was not nearly long enough. People are still getting sick as diseases, such as cancer, often emerge only after long latency periods. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that, in the coming years, cancer claims will represent 63 percent of all claims before the VCF, up from 44 percent today.

Further, as the number of sick responders and survivors continues to rise, the limited resources Congress provided to the VCF have proven inadequate and now thousands of families are facing up to 70 percent cuts in compensation.

□ 1045

I refuse to accept that. Every sick responder and survivor should be treated with the same dignity and compassion, regardless of when they became sick, and no one should be forced to spend their last days walking the Halls of Congress begging us to reauthorize this program.

That is why we are here today, to pass what I hope will be the last authorization we ever need for the VCF.

This bipartisan legislation, with over 330 cosponsors, will reverse all of the cuts in compensation and make those families whole. It will extend the authorization for the VCF through 2092, substantially the same timeline as the World Trade Center Health Program, and make technical improvements to the program.

We have asked so much of our responders and survivors. It is time for us to give them the peace of mind they deserve and pass this bill once and for all.

Finally, I want to take a moment to recognize the three men after whom we named this bill.

James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez passed away after battling 9/11-related illnesses. A month ago, Detective Alvarez testified before the Judiciary Committee, just 24 hours before what was supposed to be his 69th chemotherapy treatment, a treatment he, ultimately, was too sick to receive. Two weeks ago, he passed away.

Like every responder and survivor of 9/11, these three men kept fighting for this program, even when they knew it was too late for them. That is the spirit of 9/11. This bill is now their namesake, and we vote today in their name.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, the attacks on 9/11, designed to murder as many innocent people as possible, were acts of war against the United States. It resulted in the deaths of almost 3,000 people and left a smoldering pile of toxic debris in New York. But thousands of noble and courageous first responders scaled that smoldering pile and exhumed the dead with dignity. Today, the site includes the National September 11 Memorial.

It is fitting that Congress do more than memorialize. We must also provide. The 9/11 first responders, like all first responders, deserve to have their sacrifices recognized through programs that reasonably limit their damage to their own selves and families and the sacrifice they entailed.

This legislation would reauthorize the current September 11 Victim Compensation Fund, the medical program covering needed healthcare for those affected by the 9/11 incident, which has already been extended to the year 2090 in legislation enacted many years ago.

This legislation before us today would extend a separate program to 2090, namely, the program designed to compensate the same victims for lost earnings and other losses they suffered as a result of the 9/11 attack. The compensation will, of course, cost money, recognizing that it is not mean-spirited in any way, but simply a necessity in a responsible budgeting process where limited Federal dollars and specific funds must be allocated in a formal budget composed of specific dollar amounts divided up by a program.

Sadly, this bill comes to the floor without any provision to pay for the program, in fact, no provision at all. This bill, according to the Congressional Budget Office, will cost \$10.2 billion, and that is during the first decade of the seven decades that this bill extends.

I, like the chairman, would have preferred never to have to touch this bill again because it is in honor of those who served us, but, unfortunately, his request that he made that this will be the last time is not going to be true because of, inherently, the way the bill is being passed today. We did not sit down and get this done. The Senate will then have to do that as we go forward.

So the process is, frankly, unfulfilling, although we need to continue to move forward. So as we look forward to this, it is unfortunate that we have chosen today to put risk on this compensation, given the fact that the Senate has got to now be a part of this solution.

While the fiscal impact of this legislation will have to be addressed before it is signed into law, what is clear, though, is our collective duty to see that our first responders are treated fairly and in accordance with what they have already given of themselves to a grateful nation.

I look forward to supporting this legislation, and that is why I am a cospon-

sor of this legislation. I urge my colleagues to do so as well. But it is sad to know that we will have to touch this again. And time will pass before this happens because the Senate will have to take this up and have to do what we should have done here and find that pay-for in a bicameral and bipartisan way so that we don't have to touch this again and those who are suffering will know that this body is committed to them.

I commend my chairman, and I am glad that we are on this bill together. I just wish that we didn't have to touch it again, but we are going to have to. But that is not going to stand in the way, today, of us honoring the names on this bill and honoring every face that this bill will help for those who served us and our Nation.

I fully commend this bill to the body of this House as we move forward today, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY), one of the chief sponsors of the bill.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I rise to urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 1327, the Never Forget the Heroes Act, and to thank the 332 colleagues of mine who have cosponsored this historic, bipartisan legislation.

When the planes hit on 9/11, our first responders did not hesitate. Firefighters, police officers, medical, construction workers, and volunteers from all around the country rushed to Ground Zero, the Pentagon, and the Shanksville crash sites. It was a national response to a national terrorist attack.

We lost nearly 3,000 lives on that day, and in the nearly 18 years since the attack, the death toll continues to climb.

We, as a nation, have a moral obligation, a double moral obligation, to take care of the people who took care of us and those who take care of them now—because they cannot work—first and foremost, for their service that day and in the days and weeks and months to follow; and secondly, because of the toxic lie our government told them: that it was safe to work on the site when it, clearly, was not. Because of their exposure to toxins, many of them have cancers and are sick and dying.

In 2015, Congress passed the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, making the World Trade Center Health Program permanent, but it extended the Victims Compensation Fund only to 2020. Not only is the fund about to expire, but making matters worse, it is also running out of money.

In February, the special master announced that, due to more and more claims, the fund does not have enough money to make it to 2020. They have had to reduce payouts by 50 to 70 percent, and this is devastating for those

who depend on this fund. That is why we need to pass the Never Forget the Heroes Act today to fully and permanently fund the Victims Compensation Fund.

These heroes and their families cannot wait any longer, and I hope they will never have to come back to this Congress again to ask again and again for help and support for their healthcare and their families. We need to make this fund permanent.

If you remember 9/11, you remember that we as a nation vowed that we would never forget. None of us in this coalition will rest until we have turned that promise into a law to help the heroes who were there to help us.

I join my colleagues, JERRY NADLER and PETER KING, the lead sponsors of this bill. I thank them for their dedication and work. I thank my staff, and I thank the heroes who are named in our bill, Luis Alvarez, Ray Pfeifer, and James Zadroga, for their inspiration.

I urge my colleagues to stand with the heroes and vote for this bill.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING).

Mr. KING of New York. Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member for recognizing me, and let me also thank the gentleman for the support that the gentleman has given to this bill.

When the gentleman from Georgia went on the bill, it was a major turning point, so I thank the gentleman for that. It also shows that this is not a partisan or regional issue. It affects people in all parties, all districts in the United States, and all States throughout the country.

This was a major effort which the country came together on after 9/11, and as a result of that, there have been casualties and deaths from all over the country. Now, in my own district, I had 150 people killed, but I believe there are going to be even more than that by the time these illnesses run their course.

There are so many people in the prime of life who have been cut down from these 9/11 cancers, blood disorders, and the various intestinal tract illnesses. It has just been a horrible experience to go through for all of these people and their families.

But today is a major milestone on the road to full justice for all those who risked their lives both on the day of 9/11 and in the days, weeks, and months after 9/11: those who worked down at the pile of Ground Zero, those who risked their lives then and are now suffering the consequences of that and those who will suffer the consequences in the years ahead. These are late-developing cancers, and that is why it is so important that this bill be passed.

Let me stress again how bipartisan this is. I commend JERRY NADLER and CAROLYN MALONEY for the outstanding work they have done. This goes back more than 15 years that this fight has

gone on in one dimension or another. Hopefully, this will be the final struggle we have. Many details have to be worked out, but this should be it, today, as far as finally doing what has to be done for those men and women from 9/11.

Let me also thank the Speaker, NANCY PELOSI. She was instrumental in getting this passed back in 2010, and I want to thank the gentlewoman for keeping her commitment to making sure we got it done this year on a bipartisan basis.

Also, we have people here today like Jake Lemonda from the UFOA, the Uniformed Fire Officers Association, and Gerald Fitzgerald from the Uniformed Firefighters Association of Greater New York. We have people, again, on both sides.

I want to thank my colleagues, Congressman LEE ZELDIN and Congressman FITZPATRICK from Pennsylvania, for their efforts.

We have to, again, make sure that the message goes out to the American people that this is not a regional bill. This is something that involves the entire Nation. This involves the commitment of the United States to always stand with and be with those who put their lives on the line for the rest of us.

So, again, I can't emphasize enough the importance of this. The men and women out there, those people in our districts that we see, those people who we see day in and day out, week in and week out, those who are suffering, those who have had their benefits cut because of the shortage in the fund, that can never be allowed to happen. We have to go forward.

And, again, I want to emphasize that this is bipartisan. This involves the entire Nation, and it is important that we target those who are the enemies here. The terrorists who attacked on 9/11 brought this about. They are the ones who caused this.

It is the men and women who responded, who went back down to that pile day after day after day, week after week, month after month, doing what they could in the rescue and recovery effort, who showed unusual courage. The least we should do is show what is expected of us, and that is to do what has to be done to make sure that they and their families receive the compensation that they need and are entitled to. This is part of the lasting debt America has to the men and women of 9/11 and those who worked in the days, weeks, and months afterwards.

Madam Chair, I urge full support of this legislation. Hopefully, when it goes to the Senate, it will be acted on quickly. The victims of 9/11 have been waiting too long as it is. We can't allow a day to go by. I urge adoption of the bill.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of pro-

ceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the Speaker of the House, someone who has done more for this than anyone else. Without the gentlewoman's strong support, this bill never would have passed back in 2010.

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his kind remarks and for his tremendous leadership.

From the first minutes of the assault on our country, Chairman NADLER was there to meet the needs of our country as we protected, but also to meet the needs of those who rushed in to save lives.

I want to also salute Congresswoman CAROLYN MALONEY, who has worn a firefighters jacket through the heat of the summer now, but all spring, until this bill was brought up on the floor. I thank the gentlewoman for not only wearing the jacket, but for her relentless, persistent advocacy on behalf of our 9/11 heroes.

I am so proud that this time this bill is bipartisan, and I thank the distinguished gentleman, Mr. KING from New York, for his leadership, for his recognition of the bipartisan nature of what we are doing, what we did then and what we are doing now. I thank the gentleman, Mr. KING, for his leadership as well.

H.R. 1327 is the Never Forget the Heroes: James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act—a big name, a tall order, and long overdue.

□ 1100

When we talk about 9/11, we tread on sacred ground. On that dark day, our Nation suffered loss we could never have imagined, and we witnessed heroism that we will never forget.

Because of our heroes, 9/11 is etched in our Nation's history not only as a day of profound loss and tragedy but also a day of powerful unity and resilience. On September 11 and in its aftermath, our brave first responders were there for us. We must always be there for them.

The Never Forget the Heroes Act takes long-overdue action to provide the financial security and support that 9/11 heroes, survivors, and families deserve. Today, we are honored to take this action to ensure that all people suffering from illnesses related to 9/11 or by the debris removal and cleanup efforts in their aftermath and their families get the full awards they have been promised.

It is critically important that we restore the compensation to those hit by drastic, unfair cuts and ensure that their claims will be fully paid in the future.

One of the reasons that we have to have this additional legislation is because there are so many more diag-

noses of cancer and the rest that followed.

This bill honors the heroes after which it is named, James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez. Those heroes showed courage beyond measure not only by running toward danger that day but by giving their last days to fight for all harmed on 9/11.

We are blessed by the presence of members of their families and other advocates, including first responders suffering from 9/11-related illnesses, here in the Capitol today. They have done the outside organizing as we did the inside maneuvering. They have made the complete difference.

I thank Jon Stewart for raising the profile of this issue so that when we pass the bill here today, it will be received positively by the United States Senate.

Two weeks ago, as we all know, America lost Luis Alvarez, an NYPD detective and advocate who died from 9/11-related cancer. It was a holy moment for us when he testified before Congress last month before he was scheduled to receive his 69th round of chemotherapy. He said then to Congress: "You all said you would never forget. Well, I'm here to make sure that you don't."

With this bill, we honor the sacrifice of Luis and many other heroes and say: We will never forget.

Madam Speaker, I urge a strong, overwhelming, bipartisan vote for this bill for our responders, survivors, and their families and do so with eternal gratitude to them for what they have done. I urge a "yes" vote.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN).

Mr. ZELDIN. Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member for his cosponsorship and his leadership with this issue.

Madam Speaker, I rise today on behalf of our 9/11 victims, first responders, and their families, urging my colleagues to vote "yes" on the Never Forget the Heroes: James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act.

First responders who worked on the pile day and night, aiding in the search, rescue, and cleanup efforts, were breathing in toxic debris and ash that are now known to have caused over 50 different types of cancer.

In 2011, the Zadroga Act was signed into law to help them. Five years later, it was permanently reauthorized and included \$4.6 billion for the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund, the very fund that we are here debating today.

In February, the special master of the fund reported that current funding "may be insufficient to compensate all claims," reporting that they would have to cut claims by up to 70 percent.

As was noted, in the aftermath of 9/11, the EPA told New Yorkers and these first responders that the air at Ground Zero and the surrounding area

was safe to breathe. The Federal Government was wrong.

Madam Speaker, this was not a hurricane or a flood or a tornado. This was the largest terrorist attack ever on American soil.

As Jon Stewart testified in front of the House Judiciary Committee, these terrorists weren't saying "death to Tribeca." This was an attack on all of us as Americans. We all should be voting "yes" today as Americans.

Yet, we are forcing sick first responders to come to Washington, D.C., to beg for benefits that they earned and were promised.

Last month, Luis Alvarez was one of those first responders. After his appearance in D.C., he rushed home for his 69th round of chemo. Unfortunately, he immediately ended up in hospice and passed away.

He shouldn't have had to come down here to fight on behalf of all of these other victims and first responders in the first place.

Month after month, year after year, going back to the first time the Zadroga Act was passed, how many first responders have made dozens of trips, educating, advocating, and passionately asking Members of Congress for their support?

Like so many other 9/11 first responders, this was not Lou's second or third time. Unfortunately, it was his last.

Lou Alvarez was an extraordinary man. What is truly extraordinary is that his spirit and grit represent that of each and every one of our 9/11 first responders. Think of all of those firefighters and others who rushed up to the towers when everyone else was running away. Think of those who ignored orders telling them to vacate the tower because they would not leave behind their captain.

The experience for us in the New York area is that when we meet someone when we are back home in our districts, day after day after day, people who looked larger than life, healthy and fit on 9/11, after going through multiple rounds of chemo, they are losing their battle. Their bodies are riddled with all forms of cancer because they exposed themselves to that harm when the Federal Government told them it was safe.

I thank everyone who has worked so hard to get this bill passed, including my colleagues CAROLYN MALONEY, JERRY NADLER, PETE KING, and others. I would also like to recognize the FealGood Foundation; Jon Stewart; Shepard Smith, for his reporting; and so many others fighting tooth and nail to make passage of this bill a reality.

Madam Speaker, I urge every single one of my colleagues in this House to vote "yes," and I urge the Senate to take up this bill immediately.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL), who is the distinguished chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding to me.

Madam Speaker, we all remember where we were on that fateful day of Tuesday, September 11, 2001. Today, we finally make permanent our Nation's commitment to care for the heroes of 9/11 and their families.

We all know that within the first few seconds of the horrific attacks on the World Trade Center, our brave first responders rushed toward the wreckage to help their fellow Americans. As has been said before, many of the 9/11 first responders and the survivors are now living with serious illnesses due to toxic pollutants that filled the air surrounding Ground Zero. Many of those friends and advocates are no longer with us.

Congress created the Victim Compensation Fund in 2001, which committed to those Americans and their families that we will take care of those who rushed to the scene. I was proud to be an original cosponsor of the initial bill and its subsequent reauthorizations in 2010 and 2015.

Today, H.R. 1327 keeps Congress' promise to our 9/11 responders and survivors.

I have never seen the New York delegation work this hard and together as we did for this bill. I thank Mr. NADLER, Mrs. MALONEY, and all the people for the hard work and their leadership on this. We hope it gets passed soon in the other body.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Madam Speaker, I stand here today as a former FBI agent who worked in New York City side by side with these very people we are seeking to protect today. We are here united with our colleagues from both sides of the aisle to renew the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund.

Madam Speaker, as was said repeatedly on this floor, this matter is urgent and cannot wait any longer.

On that fateful day nearly 18 years ago, American heroes rushed to save their fellow citizens without regard for their own safety. They paid a heavy price, with many today suffering from respiratory illnesses from breathing in toxic dust at Ground Zero, dust that contained lead, asbestos, mercury, and many other contaminants.

Just last month, our Nation mourned the loss of Detective Luis Alvarez, who inspired us all with his visit to Capitol Hill this year. His bravery and the bravery of all the people who sacrificed must be honored appropriately. In his memory and to honor all the brave men and women who saved lives that day, we must get this done.

Madam Speaker, as the vice chair of the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus—24 Democrats and 24 Republicans—we have endorsed this bill. We worked very hard to get over the 290-cosponsor threshold to get this on the Consensus Calendar. It currently stands at 332 cosponsors.

I thank Jon Stewart for elevating the profile of this bill. It was incredibly important for its success.

I urge all of my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans alike, to come together and support our Nation's heroes. "Never forget" must mean never forget.

These are people who did the opposite of what we are all born with, as far as our instincts go. For every single one of us, based on our genetic DNA, are instincts are to run away from danger. These are men and women who do the opposite. They run toward the danger at great physical sacrifice and at great psychological and emotional sacrifice, all in the name of serving a cause bigger than themselves.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this and make this unanimous.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES), who is the chairman of the Democratic Caucus.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Madam Speaker, I thank the chair for yielding and for his tremendous leadership.

Since the tragedy on September 11, approximately 10,000 people have been diagnosed with cancer related to toxic smoke and dust. Approximately 15,000 people are suffering with asthma or other respiratory illnesses. Approximately 10,000 people struggle with PTSD. Almost 5,000 individuals are struggling with anxiety and depression. More than 2,000 people have died since September 11.

The overwhelming majority of these individuals who are sick and afflicted are 9/11 first responders.

The Victim Compensation Fund is expected to run out of money. In order to take care of these brave heroes and individuals, we vowed as a nation to never forget. That means looking after those brave men and women who sacrificed so much in the days, weeks, months, and years after September 11. Support this legislation.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CLINE).

Mr. CLINE. Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member and the chairman of the full committee for their work on this issue, and I thank all those who worked on what has been a bipartisan effort. This is exactly the type of substantive issue that we should be focused on in the Judiciary Committee.

On September 11, 2001, terrorists attacked America and our way of life. Nearly 3,000 people died in the attacks in New York, northern Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

When the shocking images of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon first appeared on television, first responders were already on the scene. In the weeks and months that followed, these first responders and construction workers worked hard to find victims and to clear debris.

At the time, they were told the air was safe to breathe. They and the American people found out later that wasn't true. The health impacts for

those who worked and lived in lower Manhattan in the months after the attacks are real and, in many cases, have been crippling and even deadly.

That is why Congress passed legislation in 2010 to open the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund to first responders, construction workers, and others. It covers the cost of treating illnesses associated with exposure to toxins following the attacks.

During the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties hearing last month, we heard from those suffering from illnesses tied to their service after the 9/11 attacks. Those who testified moved me and the Nation as they discussed the illnesses that have beset them nearly two decades after the attacks.

I am pleased to be a cosponsor of legislation to renew the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund permanently. In honor of the sacrifices of James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez, this bill is called the Never Forget the Heroes: James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act. It honors thousands of others like them who have succumbed to their 9/11-related illnesses.

Madam Speaker, now is the time for us to move this bill. I urge the Senate to pass it after the House, and I urge the President to sign it.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 9½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Georgia has 5½ minutes remaining.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. SWALWELL).

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Madam Speaker, I was a congressional intern on Capitol Hill when September 11 happened, and I saw my colleagues go to the Capitol steps and sing, in a bipartisan fashion, "God Bless America." I saw a generation of people go into service because of what they saw our first responders do in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C., that day.

I am heartened to see today on this floor that we are uniting again to stand up for every victim of what happened that day. I hope we can get that passed in the Senate.

I want to honor and thank James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez for their work, as well as Jon Stewart. I thank him for bringing attention to this. Also, I thank our colleague CAROLYN MALONEY.

I really want to thank our chairman. This was Chairman NADLER's district, and this has been continuing casework that the gentleman has worked on. It has affected the gentleman, his staff, and his constituents. I think it is fitting that the gentleman is the chairman presiding over this today.

I am grateful the chairman has put the emotional effort and the force of

his office into making sure this happened. It means a lot to the gentleman's constituents and us as colleagues to see his leadership.

□ 1115

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS).

Mrs. DEMINGS. Madam Speaker, I retired from law enforcement 8 years ago, but I am still amazed by and grateful for the men and women who rush towards danger with little regard for their own safety.

First responders already do so much, but when there is a true emergency, a crisis, there is no one else who can do the job. That is why, when America was attacked on September 11, off-duty firefighters, law enforcement officers, and medical professionals showed up, and they joined their brothers and sisters on the front line, rushing into burning buildings.

Being a first responder is not just what they do, it is who they are. They have earned our unwavering and timely support. We cannot ask our first responders to do this job while failing to cope with the consequences.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this critical legislation. Let us never forget our heroes.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Ms. DEAN).

Ms. DEAN. Madam Speaker, in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, we saw heroism and selflessness, especially the first responders who rushed toward danger, rescued survivors, and then spent months cleaning up the wreckage.

Their selflessness was on display again last month when first responders encouraged us, Congress, to reauthorize the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund.

This Congress and I were particularly touched by Detective Luis Alvarez, who traveled to Washington during the final days of his life. He said: "I'm doing okay, but there are others out there who aren't doing okay." Detective Alvarez embodied the selflessness of so many.

On June 29, Detective Alvarez passed away, but he will be remembered and counted among those who gave their life for us.

Before he died, he said: "The government has to act like first responders, you know, put politics aside and let's get this bill done."

Detective Alvarez is right, and today we vote to permanently reauthorize VCF. First responders and their families must never again face uncertainty about whether their country will be there for them.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL).

Mr. PASCRELL. Madam Speaker, I thank our chairwoman, CAROLYN MALONEY, in particular, and PETER

KING. From the very beginning, they have been steadfast. And I say to you, the angels are singing now.

We all know it took some kicking and screaming to get this fund established in the first place, but we got it through because a lot of people were here before that period of time and gave us that support.

Firefighters are always there, but the work isn't over. They need our help. Last year, the fund announced that, due to a funding shortfall, injured and ill 9/11 responders and survivors will receive cuts to the awards that they were expecting—big cuts, 50 percent, 70 percent—for future claims. This is unacceptable.

So the all-clear sign after 9/11 from the Federal Government was premature.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield the gentleman from New Jersey an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. PASCRELL. We have here today, and we are here today to state, it will never be clear until we help every first responder who has suffered in running to the tragedy. We need to act now.

Originally, this program was named after my constituent, New York Police Department Detective James Zadroga. His service was exemplary.

Our friends keep dying—Mr. Alvarez, Mr. Pfeifer. Ground Zero.

Today we show that citizens care. We represent the citizens.

Madam Speaker, I thank this body for bringing us here today.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand in support of the heroic men and women who ran towards the falling towers on September 11, 2001. I rise for those who labored that day and for months in the toxic plume of Ground Zero. And I stand here for their families who have borne the burden of that sacrifice.

We all know it took some kicking and screaming to get this fund established. But we got it through and it has helped these brave Americans focus on their personal health and well-being. It has been critical.

But the work isn't over. They need our help again. Last year the fund announced that due to a funding shortfall, injured and ill 9/11 responders and survivors will receive cuts to the awards that they were expecting. These are big cuts: 50 percent for pending claims and 70 percent for future claims.

Unacceptable.

We must act to make whole the responders, survivors, and their families. The words "Never Forget" can't be a bumper sticker—we need to act now.

Thankfully, this bill extends the fund through 2090 and funds to ensure our first responders get the care they need.

Originally this program was named after my constituent, NYPD detective James Zadroga. His service was exemplary.

But our friends keep dying. We have added the names of NYPD detective Alvarez and FDNY firefighter Pfeifer, both 9/11 heroes who passed away from cancer and other health problems linked to Ground Zero. Their efforts shined a spotlight on all who are sick and dying, and helped get the needed care from Congress.

All three devoted their lives to helping others.

Finally, I want to thank Congresswomen CAROLYN MALONEY for her tireless work getting this bill on the floor for a vote.

We cannot let another day pass to help these brave first responders. I encourage my colleagues to vote yes and hope the Senate doesn't play the same games we saw last time. Our first responders had and have America's back. Today we show, we citizen Representatives have their back.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I thank the chairman, and I thank him for his unbelievable leadership, along with the gentlewoman from New York, CAROLYN MALONEY, our dear friend, who wore the fireman's jacket for so long, and PETER KING.

I am delighted to have been a member of the Homeland Security Committee in those early days, banging my fist and joining them in saying it must be done.

And I thank those who signed the authorization—President Obama, twice. And I say today, there should not be one single person who does not vote "yes" on this.

We have a beautiful rendition of the World Trade Center. We rebuilt that beautiful edifice. We must rebuild these lives.

I am reminded in an article by Luis Alvarez, in his final days, as he was talking to his family, he said, "I am on the pile." They asked him what he is walking in walking on the pile, Ground Zero, where he went time and time again.

And along with him, there were individual family members who came before our committee, those who were desperately in need, and to hear the special master say: I may have to cut their benefits 50 to 70 percent.

Lila Norstrom, who was a student, and, as well, Anesta Maria St. Rose Henry, the widow of Candidus Henry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Lila Norstrom was a student, and she said no one told them anything, but just go back to school.

Anesta Maria St. Rose Henry said she walks around missing her husband, along with her children.

And so they are not just statistics; they are broken lives and families. And 3,000 more will die as we go further into this time, as 3,000 died on that date.

And for those of us who were in this Congress on 9/11, we will never, never forget.

To the young people today, be reminded of the heroes, firefighters, police officers, volunteers. Let us never forget, and let us always remember this bill and these heroes who are here, and that is James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and, now, Luis Alvarez.

Madam Speaker, let us never forget, and let us vote.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GOTTHEIMER).

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Madam Speaker, we are here today to have the backs of our first responders, especially those who stood up to terrorists that morning and ran directly into the burning buildings on 9/11 and stayed for the weeks and months that followed. They are our heroes, and they need our help.

Hundreds of New Jersey and New York law enforcement, firefighters, EMTs, and others answered the call and rushed toward the pile as others ran out.

If you ask how they were able to summon the courage, they will tell you they were simply doing their job that day. And Congress now has the opportunity to do ours.

Too many first responders are still suffering from illnesses and cancers from 9/11 exposure to toxins, smoke, debris, including too many people who are still suffering in my district.

Congress set up the Victim Compensation Fund to help cover 9/11 injuries and medical expenses. Those who were exposed back in 2011 are, sadly, first developing symptoms now.

More than 47,000 claims have been filed with the fund, and more than 11,000 district claims are expected by 2020, when the fund is set to expire. We must act today.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of the bipartisan H.R. 1327, Never Forget the Heroes.

I thank Chairman NADLER, Representative CAROLYN MALONEY, and Representative PETER KING for their leadership and the Problem Solvers Caucus for strongly supporting it.

We have an obligation to do everything we can to stand by our first responders and survivors of those horrific attacks.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I will inquire through the Chair, does the gentleman have any more speakers?

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I have one more speaker, and then I am prepared to close.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I will reiterate. I know our staffs have talked. If he actually needs it, I will be happy to yield some time, if he happens to need it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from New York (Mr. SUOZZI).

Mr. SUOZZI. Madam Speaker, I thank Chairman NADLER for yielding.

Madam Speaker, this is what the American people are hungering for: Democrats and Republicans working

together to solve real problems in real people's lives.

The Victim Compensation Fund is so important to so many people, real suffering that is going on in real families after people have dedicated their lives trying to serve other people and are now paying the consequences for us.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues. I want to thank Chairman NADLER, Congresswoman MALONEY, Congressman KING. I want to thank all the Democrats and all the Republicans who cosponsored this bill, and those who will vote for it today.

I have so many friends, personal friends who volunteered days, months at the pile who are now suffering the consequences of having done that volunteer work on the pile. This is an important day for those families.

I want to thank the advocates that helped to focus our attention. I want to thank everyone who worked together to solve a very real problem in real people's lives.

This is what the United States Congress needs to be doing, and I am so happy to be a part of it.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

The names that have been talked about in this bill, and this bill has been named for them, especially Mr. Alvarez, who appeared before the committee, these are all stories and faces. This is definitely a bill that we have talked about many times.

We have talked about them in terms of numbers. We have talked about them in terms of bills and line numbers and this kind of thing. But these are actually lives, and I think that is the thing that struck me, and I am glad that there is such bipartisan support on this.

These folks should never be forgotten. They should be etched in our memories, for those of us, no matter where we were on 9/11, remember them going in. I can actually watch and still see the towers fall, knowing that at that moment lives perished and there were those who were saving others. And that is what we are here for.

I will say—and I want this to be said, because this is on the RECORD, and I want the Senate to hear me loud and clear—I wish we could have finished this bill.

We are not finished with this bill, but I am imploring Senator MCCONNELL and the others to actually take this, find the pay-for, get it done, and send it back to us as quickly as possible so that we can stamp it and send it to the President. This needs to be done, and it is something that has to happen.

I would encourage every Member of this body to vote for this bill and, at the same point, send a strong message to the Senate to fix it: Don't change it; don't dawdle with it; don't do anything except do your job over there. Put the money attached to this.

We should have done that here. We didn't. We didn't have a pay-for, but they will, and we will get this done.

To everybody waiting on us, this is not waiting on us. We are doing our job. We are going to make sure these victims are compensated, and we need to get it done quickly. That is why I support this. That is why I hope everyone on our side and the Democratic side supports this.

Madam Speaker, this has been an important part of us moving forward, remembering the lives that sacrificed for us as we move forward from that tragic day, and I appreciate everyone who has come down to speak on that.

Again, I encourage a “yes” vote on this as we move forward, and I ask the Senate to quickly—I know that sometimes may be strange for the other body—but to quickly do their job and get this back to us so that we can finish this process.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, 9 years ago, I stood here and called up for consideration the original 9/11 bill, the James Zadroga Act.

I want to thank Speaker PELOSI, Majority Leader HOYER, and Majority Whip CLYBURN for their roles in passing that bill, and now for moving us as quickly as possible to get this bill done.

I also want to thank my colleagues from New York, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. KING), for standing with me in this fight for so long, and to thank all the advocates, many of whom are here today, who have given so much and have worked so hard to pass this bill.

Finally, I want to thank Lisette Morton, my longtime legislative director and director of policy planning and member services for the Committee on the Judiciary, who is leaving my team at the end of this month after nearly 20 years.

Lisette worked for me on September 11, 2001, and she was tireless in her efforts to get a proper detoxification and cleanup after the attack in New York and to hold the EPA accountable for its failures. Without her fierce advocacy and dedication, there would be more victims today, and we would not be here considering this bill today. She will be greatly missed by this institution, by my staff, and by me.

Now, Madam Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. NADLER. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

□ 1130

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Madam Speaker, Mr. NADLER has just brought up something that I cannot let pass.

Lisette is not only someone who has given service to Mr. NADLER. She has given a great deal of service to this House and to me and to my staff personally.

She will be missed on both sides of this aisle because she understands completely what this House should be about, and that is actually service and actually getting legislation done.

Mr. NADLER. She will be greatly missed.

Madam Speaker, I now urge all my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I am very proud to be a Never Forgot the Heroes: James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez Permanent Authorization cosponsor, along with another very strong group of bipartisan Members who will not let this opportunity to enact this legislation pass. Tragically, Mr. Alvarez just passed away last month of after providing heroic testimony in support of this bill.

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 700 cases of breast cancer, 2,500 of prostate cancer, 600 of thyroid cancer, 500 of lung cancer, and 500 of kidney cancer.

There have also been other kinds of catastrophic consequences, with people who are suffering from PTSD, some 9,500 so far and counting.

Congress enacted the World Trade Health Center 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.

In February of this year—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 I thank 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. I urge the Senate to move swiftly in passing this bill so that these heroes can secure the health care benefits they deserve.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1327, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois). Pursuant to House Resolution 476 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2500.

Will the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM) kindly resume the chair.

□ 1132

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2500) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2020 for military activities of the Department of Defense and for military construction, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, with Ms. MCCOLLUM (Acting Chair) in the chair.