

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 20, 2010

Dear Colleague,

It has been 9 years since our country experienced the tragedy of 9/11. Nine years since thousands of rescue workers rushed selflessly into the rubble and dust to try to save lives and recover victims. And sadly, it's been nine years that these heroes have suffered with the lingering health effects from their work at Ground Zero. Thousands of rescue workers and community members are afflicted by asthma, PTSD, and a myriad of other breathing and lung conditions.

For nine years, the Federal Government has pieced together funding to provide treatment for many of those afflicted. Attached is the 2010 report from the World Trade Center (WTC) Medical Working Group in New York City. Mayor Bloomberg appointed this group of health experts in 2007 to review 9/11 scientific research and services on an annual basis to better inform policymakers. The WTC Medical Working Group's report summarizes the most recently published clinical and epidemiological research. Much of this research is based on new data from the federally funded WTC Health Registry. The WTC Health Registry is the largest post-disaster exposure registry in U.S. history, enrolling more than 71,000 exposed individuals to be tracked for up to 20 years.

Some notable findings included in the report are:

- Clinical studies demonstrate that steep declines in pulmonary function first detected among firefighters and EMS workers within a year after 9/11 have largely persisted, even among those who never smoked.
- Four times as many firefighters and twice as many EMS workers had below-normal lung function for their ages 6-7 years after 9/11 as they did before 9/11.
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) remains the most common 9/11-related health effect among exposed adults.

The World Trade Center (WTC) health programs that are treating and monitoring those who are sick, or who could become sick, rely on yearly appropriations and do not have sustained funding. In 2009, we introduced the *James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act*, S. 1334, which creates a national program for local community members, as well as the rescue and recovery workers from across the country, so they can receive consistent care for 9/11 related health conditions. We need a permanent, comprehensive program to deliver efficient, cost-effective care, monitoring, and treatment. Additionally, it would ensure that victims would be compensated for any losses they have experienced as a result of health problems connected to breathing the toxins at Ground Zero.

Of those enrolled in the WTC Health Registry, more than 14,000 live outside the New York City region, indicating a severe need for a comprehensive national program. The federal government has an undeniable moral obligation to help the heroes of 9/11 and all others exposed. Failure to do so may have long term implications on future response efforts. Passage of the 9/11 Health and Compensation Act will establish a model of how to provide care and compensation for the heroes

who endangered their health, and it will send a strong signal that our country will support them as they heal from the horrific tragedy of that fateful day.

We strongly urge your support of this important bill.

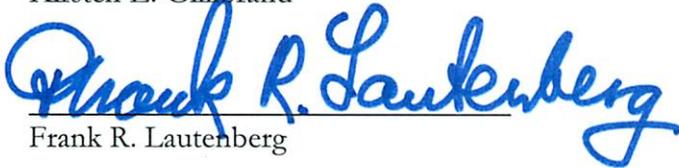
Sincerely,



Kirsten E. Gillibrand



Charles E. Schumer



Frank R. Lautenberg



Robert Menendez

Charles E. ...
Robert ...

William ...
Robert ...