

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

September 11, 2024

Dear Senator / Representative,

The AFL-CIO urges you to cosponsor S.4724/H.R.9101, the “9/11 Responder and Survivor Health Funding Correction Act of 2024.” The World Trade Center Health Program continues to take care of responders and survivors from the World Trade Center and lower Manhattan, the Pentagon, and Shanksville crash site, who live in every State and 434 out of 435 Congressional Districts. Every member of Congress should support this legislation.

These bipartisan bills, introduced by Senator Kristen Gillibrand and Representative Andrew Garbarino, would ensure there is adequate funding for the World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP) to deal with the projected shortfall both in the short-term and for years to come. Congress created this program to monitor and treat emergency responders, recovery and clean-up workers, and others suffering serious diseases as a result of hazardous exposures resulting from the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

In the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks, tens of thousands of emergency workers, construction workers, and others rushed to the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and Shanksville crash site to assist in rescue and recovery operations. These workers and residents, and others near Ground Zero, were exposed to a toxic mix of dust and fumes from the collapse of the World Trade Center and the fires that lingered. Now many of these individuals, particularly the heroic responders who experienced the highest exposures, are suffering from serious cancers, respiratory diseases and other health problems. We must ensure those who have been made ill from the attacks receive appropriate medical care and improve their livelihoods.

Because of these urgent and critical needs, Congress reauthorized the WTCHP through 2090—a bipartisan effort; however, this reauthorization was tied to regular inflation rather than medical inflation, which is increasing much faster, leading to a program funding shortfall. This means that responders and other survivors who were meant to be covered by this health program will now face cuts in available care and the program will have to stop taking new responders and survivors. The bill would also make minor technical changes to the statute to improve its operations, and provide additional resources for research and data collection on 9/11 conditions, which is critical for understanding the full effect of these toxic exposures.

Our nation needs to fulfill its promise in the wake of the attacks. The AFL-CIO strongly urges you to support and cosponsor S.4724/H.R.9101, which would preserve care for 9/11 responders and survivors who need and deserve long-term medical monitoring and treatment.

Sincerely,



Jody Calemine
Director, Government Affairs