



**\*\*Press Release\*\***

**For Immediate Release**  
**May 29, 2019**

Contact: Brandon Clarke | [bclarke@council.nyc.gov](mailto:bclarke@council.nyc.gov) | (646) 300-2944  
Rush Perez | [ruperez@council.nyc.gov](mailto:ruperez@council.nyc.gov) | (646) 592-0499

***Council Members, Advocates, and Supporters Call On Congress  
to Permanently Fund the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund***

*Council Members Miller and Chin Introduce Resolution Supporting 9/11 VCF Bill Passage*

**New York, NY** — On the eve of the seventeen year anniversary marking the end of recovery operations at Ground Zero, Council Members I. Daneek Miller and Margaret Chin rallied with fellow elected officials, advocates, and supporters to call on Congress to pass the **Never Forget the Heroes: Permanent Authorization of the September 11<sup>th</sup> Victim Compensation Fund Act** ([H.R.1327/S.546](#)) sponsored by New York Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand.

Council Members Miller and Chin also introduced **Resolution 897**, which calls on Congress to enact **Never Forget the Heroes** in order to make the Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) permanent, and provide it with full financing through Fiscal Year 2090. The bill has earned the bipartisan support of over 330 congressional officials and is scheduled to be heard next month by the House Judiciary Committee.

The VCF is due to expire next year, and the Special Master overseeing it announced that new claims would be reduced by as much as 70% due to the rapid pace of 9/11 illness claims that have badly depleted the fund's \$7 billion reserve, threatening to leave over 90,000 responders and survivors nationwide with no place to seek help for developing injuries and illnesses.

The VCF was originally established in 2001 and paid out over \$7 billion to the surviving family members of September 11th terrorist attack victims, as well as over 2,600 other claimants who sustained related injuries before it closed in 2004. It was later reopened in 2011 after then-President Obama signed the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act into law, which Congress reauthorized in late 2015.

Over 2,000 active duty New York City Fire Department personnel - including EMS - and nearly one thousand from the New York Police Department have been forced into retirement due to

disabling 9/11 injuries. Some 380 FDNY and NYPD members have died from such injuries since the attacks. To date, the VCF has made nearly 28,000 initial or revised award determinations totaling more than \$5 billion.

Overall, the rate of responders and survivors who have become sick or died has surged since 2004, as the toxic particles that emanated from “the pile” at Ground Zero continue to do damage throughout their bodies, spawning cancers, asthma, and gastrointestinal illnesses, to name a few. These responders and survivors are spread across the country--with over 95,000 living in every State in the Union.

“The notion that the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund could one day cease to exist is unimaginable,” said **Council Member I. Daneek Miller, Civil Service and Labor Committee Chair**. “The escalating crisis of sick and injured seeking help through the VCF to address their health needs have grown beyond the program’s capacity and must be resolved quickly and definitively. Council Member Chin and I applaud the leadership of Congresswoman Maloney and Senator Gillibrand – as well as that of their allies in Congress and the 9/11 advocacy community – in wasting no effort to ensure the Never Forget the Heroes Act becomes law, and we proudly lend our support towards this initiative to provide every afflicted responder and survivor the peace of mind they rightly deserve, as they bravely face the many challenges that lie ahead.”

“The September 11th Victim Compensation Fund represents a promise our country made to the survivors and first responders of the September 11th terrorist attacks. With more individuals coming forward with related illnesses, we cannot turn our backs on these survivors,” said **Council Member Margaret S. Chin**. “With the funding for this critical program set to expire next year, it is incumbent upon elected representatives to ensure our country delivers on this promise. That is why I am proud to join Council Member Miller on a Resolution to call for the passage of the Never Forget the Heroes Act. This bill, sponsored by Congresswoman Maloney and Senator Gillibrand, will ensure that no individual who has lived or worked near the World Trade Center site will ever have to wonder how they are going to pay for their medical treatments.”

“On September 11th, 2001, our nation lost 2,997 people, but soon deaths from 9/11-related illnesses may outnumber those who were killed on that horrific day,” said **Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney**. “We vowed to never forget the first responders, survivors, and families who risked their lives and made incredible sacrifices for our country. Congress passed the 9/11 Health and Compensation Act that I authored to cover health care and provide compensation to those made ill by the toxic materials released when the towers fell. While we made health care permanent, the compensation fund is running out of funds. We need to make sure these heroes never have to go without the support they need, so I authored the Never Forget the Heroes Act to fully fund the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund and make it permanent. I am so grateful to Council Members Chin and Miller for introducing this critical resolution and working to add the strong voice of New Yorkers in urging Congress to pass the Never Forget the Heroes Act.”

“We must never forget the heroes of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, which means we must ensure that the first responders from that terrible day get the health coverage they deserve,” said **New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson**. “We know that many of the women and men who served our city and our country on 9/11 have become sick, which is why it is vital that Congress pass the bipartisan ‘Never Forget the Heroes: Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act.’ I thank U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney and U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, and all other elected officials involved in the efforts to pass this landmark legislation.”

“As a country, we made a pledge never to forget the heroism and sacrifice made by New York’s first responders and the survivors of the 9/11 attacks,” said **Council Member Mark Levine, Chair of the Health Committee**. “These brave victims are still experiencing dire health effects related to the trauma and physical toll they experienced that day and in the months that followed. We ask Congress to live up to that pledge by establishing this permanent fund to support those who had so much taken from them. It is our duty and obligation.”

“Following the tragic events of 9/11, first responders immediately jumped in to provide help however they could, sacrificing their health and well-being to save lives and repair the damage done to our city,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards, Chair of the Committee on Public Safety**. “It’s not enough to say ‘never forget.’ We must show these selfless heroes that we have not and will not ever forget their sacrifice by permanently funding the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act. I’d like to thank my colleagues, Council Member Miller and Chin for their dedication to funding healthcare for first responders.”

"It is the responsibility of our federal government to permanently expand and fund the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund for first responders, survivors and families of those that perished in the terrorist related attacks on September 11, 2001. New Yorkers do not forget the recovery efforts, healing and rebuilding in the aftermath of the attacks on the Twin Towers, a few blocks from City Hall, and now I ask my colleagues to support the Council Resolution urging the U.S. Congress to pass H.R.1327/S.546, Never Forget the Heroes: Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act, without delay,” said **Council Member Mark Treyger**. “I thank my colleagues Council Members Miller, Chin, Borelli, Cohen, and Richards for co-sponsoring this bill with me, so that all New Yorkers affected by this tragic and horrific event, have the resources to rehabilitate available to them indefinitely.”

"With the passage of the 9/11 VCF, the United States made a pledge to survivors, first responders and their families that they would receive the resources they need after their heroic actions," said **Council Member Andrew Cohen**. "We cannot default on this promise and let this funding expire as many of those affected continue to seek crucial medical services. I am proud to join my colleagues at New York City Council in calling on Congress to permanently fund the 9/11 Victims Compensation Fund (H.R.1327/S.549), and I fully support Council Member Miller and Chin’s Never Forget the Heroes Act resolution."

“I am very grateful to my dear friend Council Member Chin and her colleague Council Member Miller for calling on Washington D.C. to pass Congresswoman Maloney’s Never Forget the

Heroes Act,” said **John Feal, President of FealGood Foundation**. “Passing this bill will mean that we will no longer need to go to the nation’s capital to request assistance on behalf of 9/11 first responders and survivors. The more than 330 co-sponsors on this bill is inspiring and indicative of the deep respect this country has for these heroes.”

“The Victims Compensation Fund has seen a major increase in claims for serious 9/11-related illnesses and cancers from downtown residents and workers, as well as from responders so much so, that the funding has been exhausted,” said **Kimberly Flynn, Chair WTC Health Program’s Survivors Steering Committee**. “The recent drastic cuts to awards have compounded the tragedy for those who are suffering, stressed and struggling to manage. And it is clear that the wave of illness caused by WTC toxic exposures will not crest anytime soon. We thank the City Council for its strong support for permanently extending the VCF’s compensation benefits that 9/11-affected New Yorkers, as well as those who came to New York City’s rescue, need and deserve.”

“Something is terribly wrong with Washington to make the survivors of 9/11 scrounge for help,” said **Michael Mulgrew, President of the United Federation of Teachers**. “Congress and the White House need to hear the voices of those who are suffering and do what’s right – time is running out.”

“There is no expiration date on our nation’s obligation to care for the heroes of 9/11 and their families,” said **Pat Lynch, President of the Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association of the City of New York**. “The greatest sacrifice still lies ahead for too many of our police officers and other first responders, in the form of new cancers and other diseases that are still emerging all these years later. It is unconscionable that families struggling with loss or serious illness will be turned away or forced to accept less than they deserve. We applaud Council Members Miller and Chin for introducing this resolution. Congress must honor its obligation by permanently reauthorizing and fully funding the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund.”

“We strongly urge Congress to pass the Never Forget the Heroes: Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act, which would fully finance and extend the authorization for the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund for decades to come,” said **Gary LaBarbera, President of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York**. This extension would provide peace and security to the families of construction workers, first responders, and other heroes who tragically lost their lives as a result of the attacks and from cleanup efforts in the aftermath of that day.”

“Our nation must make good on our promises to the victims whose lives were forever altered on September 11, 2001, and to the heroes who led the rescue, recovery and rebuilding efforts,” said **Mark Cannizzaro, President of Council of School Supervisors & Administrators**. “We have rightfully assured them that we would never forget the immeasurable sacrifices they made on that tragic day and in the terrible aftermath that followed. The school leaders of New York City join the many voices calling on Congress to permanently fund the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund so that all those suffering have complete access to the high-quality

care and resources that they deserve and their families are properly supported in their time of need.”

The **Never Forget the Heroes Act** is expected to be passed by the U.S. House of Representatives with support from across the political spectrum, after which it will await a hearing and vote in the U.S. Senate.

###