



****Press Release****

For Immediate Release

July 23, 2019

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

New York City Council Passes Resolution

Supporting Permanent Authorization and Funding of 9/11 VCF

The vote to adopt the resolution adds the Council to the chorus of advocates demanding passage of the Never Forget the Heroes Act

New York, NY — Today, the New York City Council voted to adopt **Resolution 897** – sponsored by Council Members I. Daneek Miller and Margaret Chin – which called on Congress to enact the **Never Forget the Heroes: James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act** ([H.R.1327/S.546](#)) sponsored by New York Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand.

The bill would make the Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) permanent and solvent through Fiscal Year 2092, and was recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives with the bipartisan support of 402 members.

This month several 9/11 first responders passed away, including retired NYPD Detective Luis Alvarez, Sergeant Thomas Fennessy, and Detective Christopher Cranston; and Kevin Nolan and Richard Driscoll became the 199th and 200th members of FDNY to die from a 9/11-related illness.

The loss of these American heroes underscores the urgent need to permanently authorize the VCF which is due to expire next year. Awards from the program have already been 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. Without the passage of the Never Forget the Heroes Act, over 90,000 responders and survivors nationwide would have no place to seek help to treat developing injuries and illnesses.

Overall, the rate of responders and survivors who have become sick or died has surged since 2004, as the toxic particles that surrounded 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, and nearly 50,000 of them have been diagnosed with a 9/11 health condition.

“Our movement to preserve the dignity of 9/11 responders, workers, and survivors recently lost another of its champions in retired NYPD Detective Luis Alvarez, as well as several of his fellow first responders, including the 199th and 200th members of the FDNY; all of whom died from a 9/11 related illness,” said **Council Member I. Daneek Miller, Civil Service and Labor Committee Chair**. “With today’s vote, we honor their sacrifice and call national attention to the plight of the nearly 50,000 responders and survivors across the country that have been diagnosed with a 9/11 health condition. I, along with my colleague Council Member Margaret Chin, was proud to sponsor this resolution. The Never Forget the Heroes Act is desperately needed to ensure those who were promised they would be taken care of will have the peace of mind they need and deserve. We expect the Senate to vote without further delay to pass the House bill that recently won the bipartisan support of 402 members. The Council will continue to work on behalf of the 9/11 community, as well as any who were exposed to Ground Zero toxins but have yet to join the expanding universe of the sick, to ensure they and their families receive every available resource.”

“The first responders and survivors of 9/11 live in every State in the Union,” said **Council Member Margaret S. Chin**. “They are teachers, firefighters, police officers and paramedics. The recent loss of Detective Christopher Cranston and firefighter Richard Driscoll serves to underscore further the moral duty of our country to those who sacrificed so much. I am proud that the New York City Council overwhelmingly voted to call on President Trump to sign Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney’s Never Forget the Heroes Act which will permanently authorize the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund through 2092. Now, it is time for our nation’s leaders to step up to make sure that no American hero is let down by the broken politics in Washington.

###