

Dear Friends,

It's been almost ten years since the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center and we're still coming to terms with the impact. Thousands lost their lives that day, and as a nation we continue to mourn them.

Unfortunately too many people don't realize that the death toll continues to rise from 9/11, claiming the lives of emergency workers and first responders who ran in while everyone else was running out.

Their names no longer run in the New York Times and their names won't be etched in the memorials – but that doesn't make their actions any less heroic or their deaths any less of a tragedy.

When the Twin Towers fell, the search for survivors became our nation's greatest concern. Many heroic men and women came from all over the country to the site to help in the recovery efforts. They weren't just clearing debris -- they were trying to save lives. They didn't stop to ask if it was too dangerous – and they didn't stop to find out if it would be bad for their health.

Today, many of them are struggling with illnesses caused by the toxins they breathed in that day and the weeks that followed. Some are even battling cancer.

But we can do something to help.

Remembering those who were killed that day can't be just about memorials and ceremonies – it has to be about more. Remembering 9/11 has to be about remembering that we are all Americans – and that we must stand together and stand up for each other, the way these men and women did ten years ago. Remembering 9/11 can't just be about mourning those who died – it has to be about taking care of those who lived.

The rescue workers who showed up that day have seen more than their fair share of trouble since. Besides dealing with debilitating illnesses, many lost their jobs. The same jobs that made them in such high demand in the days following 9/11 — emergency response, construction and engineering — can be hard to do with injured lungs.

Along with their jobs also went their health care. Those who were so selfless and so fearless when we were in trouble were left with no help.

But we wouldn't accept that. That's why I am proud to say that we passed the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act. I am also working with my colleagues in Congress to include many 9/11-related illnesses – including cancer-- in the health coverage provided by the Zadroga Act. For ten long years, the first responders who became sick after working at Ground

Zero had nowhere to turn. Today, by ensuring health coverage for the heroes who survived 9/11 and its aftermath, we can help to honor the memory of those who did not.

On Sunday, as we remember that day ten years ago, let's also remember the rescue workers who still need our support. Let's remember the troops that are still overseas fighting against al-Qaeda. And let's always remember those who were lost.

God bless,

Steve Israel
Member of Congress