

Dear Friend,

It's hard to believe, but the attacks on the World Trade Center happened nine years ago this week. As that day grows more distant, we must work to keep our memories of that day alive, offer support to those who lost loved ones, and properly honor the bravery and patriotism of the hundreds of emergency responders, rescue workers and plain ordinary people who rushed towards the smoke when so many were in need.

On September 11, 2001, thousands of first responders and rescue workers – many of them from our community – rushed into danger at Ground Zero.

What those heroes didn't know then was how harmful exposure to the toxins at Ground Zero would be. More than 71,000 of those volunteers at Ground Zero were exposed to harmful chemicals during cleanup. Presently, there are 13,000 first responders who are ill and 53,000 whose health is being monitored.

When Congress returns next week, we should remember those who helped in the aftermath by helping them get their benefits, ensuring that they are receiving the best care possible, and standing up for them when bureaucracy and red tape get in the way. That's why I'm pleased that the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act will come to the floor for another vote in September. This bill would provide mandatory funding for World Trade Center Health Programs, which provide medical treatment for those exposed to toxins at Ground Zero. It would also reopen the 9/11 Victims Compensation Fund to ensure that victims of the September 11 attacks and those affected by cleanup are provided for financially.

Although it's hard to think it was nine years ago, to those first responders waiting for treatment, the past nine years have felt like a lifetime.

For more information on my work fighting for 9/11 first responders, please visit my website at <http://israel.house.gov>.

Nine Years Later

Wednesday, September 08, 2010

Sincerely,

Steve Israel

Member of Congress