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Congresswoman Matsui Votes to Assist 9/11 Heroes

Ensures Adequate Health Care and Compensation for First Responders and Victims of September 11th Attacks

WASHINGTON, DC– Today, Congresswoman Doris Matsui (CA-05), joined her colleagues in the House of Representatives to pass the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, H.R. 847. This legislation ensures both health care and compensation for first responders and victims of the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001.

“I am pleased that the House has acted to pass the 9/11 Health and Compensation Act that provides long overdue compensation and ensures health care for the many heroes of September 11th” Congresswoman Matsui stated. “It is my hope that the Senate acts quickly on this issue so that we can send this bill to the President and do what is right for the American people.”

In the wake of September 11th, several programs were set up to assist first responders and citizens affected by the tragedy, including a registry of responders to the disaster, a registry of community members who lived at or around ground zero, and programs to monitor and treat the health effects of their exposure to the numerous chemicals and hazards encountered during the disaster. Additionally, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, Congress created the Victims Compensation Fund (VCF), a federal program to compensate the families of 9/11 victims and those who suffered personal injury and limit litigation. While Congress has provided some funding to continue these health programs since 2003, these programs have never been authorized and have relied on year-to-year appropriations.

H.R. 847 builds on the current World Trade Center health program to establish authorizing language and a capped-mandatory spending so that, even as time passes, victims of 9/11 will still be adequately cared for. It will authorize and fund health programs to provide monitoring

and treatment to first responders and community residents who were affected by exposure of toxic plume in the wake of 9/11. In addition, H.R. 847 will reopen the Victims Compensation Fund until 2031, in order to give the greatest opportunity possibility for victims to file claims and protect those whose injuries may be latent and may manifest during the next two decades.

Unlike other mandatory spending programs, funding is capped for both total dollars available and total number of people who may participate. The bill would cost \$7.4 billion, which is fully paid for by closing a tax loophole on foreign companies.

“Some may try to paint this as a New York issue,” added Congresswoman Matsui, “But the truth is that residents from all across the country acted to help their fellow Americans in their time of need, without regard for their own wellbeing. On that day, we were reminded what unites us as Americans, and it is in that spirit of service and community that we must continue to take care of those who selflessly took care of their neighbors, colleagues, and perfect strangers alike.”

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