

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

January 23, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

When the World Trade Center collapsed on September 11, 2001, first responders, building and construction trades workers and volunteers came from all around the country to aid in the enormous rescue and recovery efforts. Other workers and residents in the area were also exposed to a poisonous mixture of asbestos, dioxin, jet fuel, and other toxins. Many of them are now suffering from serious, and sometimes fatal, illnesses as a result of their heroism. You stood with many of the first responders at the site of the World Trade Center and thanked them for their efforts. You noted that “we have seen our national character in eloquent acts of sacrifice.”

The 9/11 health programs have continued to monitor and to treat many of the workers and residents exposed to the toxins at Ground Zero and Fresh Kills. It is imperative that adequate funding is provided to these programs administered by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) within the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). In fiscal year 2008, the estimated need for 9/11 health programs as proposed by NIOSH was over \$200 million and yet you only requested a meager \$25 million for these programs. On February 4th when you release your budget request outlining your fiscal priorities for fiscal year 2009, you have an opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to 9/11 health programs and the first responders you stood with at Ground Zero, many of whom now suffer debilitating illnesses.

Those who responded heroically without regard to their own health to one of this country's greatest tragedies deserve our unwavering gratitude and support. We have a moral obligation to take care of their 9/11 health related illnesses. It is our national responsibility to care for those who did our country proud in the hours, days, weeks and months following the horrific attacks. We urge you to include the funding that is needed for 9/11 health programs in your budget and stand with these responders, workers and residents in their time of need.

Sincerely,



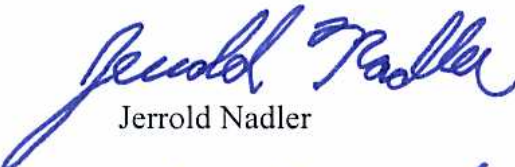
Charles E. Schumer



Hillary Rodham Clinton


Frank Lautenberg


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Jerrold Nadler


Carolyn Maloney


Vito Fossella