

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 30, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Room S-128, The Capitol,  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Room S-128, The Capitol,  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Health,  
Education, Labor and Pensions  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Health,  
Education, Labor and Pensions  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy, Chairman Shelby, Chairwoman Murray, and Ranking Member Blunt:

I write to urge you to include the *9/11 Responder and Survivor Health Funding Correction Act* in any upcoming legislative vehicle, including the Omnibus spending bill or any end-of-year funding package. The World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP) will soon face a \$3.6 billion deficit, which will impact the medical care that over 120,000 responders are receiving for their 9/11 cancers and other medical conditions.

The WTCHP was created by Congress in 2010 and was reauthorized in 2015 until 2090. The program covers the lifespans of all exposed, including responders and survivors of the attack on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, the Shanksville crash site, children who were in schools in downtown Manhattan on 9/11 and during clean-up, and those who have since experienced, or are expected to experience, adverse health effects that are linked to the attacks in the coming years.

Concerningly, operating costs for the program and increases in participation by injured 9/11 responders and survivors have increased beyond what was projected in the 2015 extension and because of those increased costs, the program now faces a projected funding shortfall. If current projected costs continue, the program will have to stop enrolling new responders and survivors beginning FY2024 and will need to make additional cuts to services thereafter which will directly impact all health care related services provided under the program. Soon the WTCHP will not have enough funds to provide care for those still suffering the physical and mental impacts of 9/11. This includes the responders and survivors who will be newly diagnosed with 9/11-associated cancers caused by their toxic exposures.

I introduced a bill in August 2021 to address the funding shortfall and that guarantees adequate funding for the WTCHP. This legislation would create a new fund that would provide an additional \$3.6 billion dollars to the program over the next ten years. This includes \$46 million dollars to pay for the creation of the new research cohort to study the impacts of 9/11 on approximately 35,000 people who were children at the time of the attacks who resided or attended school or daycare in the NYC disaster area. The bill also includes \$514 million to pay for the cost of enrolling Department of Defense military and civilian responders from the Pentagon and Shanksville sites, along with other Federal responders, to join the health program.

While the WTCHP has played an essential role in delivering the health care services that our 9/11 responders and survivors deserve, we cannot ignore the fact that the program's funding is now at risk, and we should do everything in our power to ensure we prevent this shortfall from happening.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to working with you to support our 9/11 responders and survivors who were there during our nation's most trying times.

Sincerely,



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Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator