



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

Representing America's Finest

317 South Patrick Street. ~ Alexandria, Virginia ~ 22314-3501
(703) 549-0775 ~ (800) 322-NAPO ~ Fax: (703) 684-0515
www.napo.org ~ Email: info@napo.org

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Florida Police Benevolent Association

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WILLIAM J. JOHNSON

Executive Director and General Counsel

June 9, 2015

The Honorable Joe Pitts
Chairman
Subcommittee on Health
House Energy and Commerce Committee
420 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Gene Green
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health
House Energy and Commerce Committee
2370 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Pitts and Ranking Member Green:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), I am writing to submit this statement for the official record in response to the hearing of the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Health, to examine the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act (H.R. 1786). NAPO is grateful to the Subcommittee for scheduling a hearing on this critical piece of legislation, and we wish to express our strong and unyielding support for the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act.

NAPO is a coalition of police unions and associations from across the United States that serves to advance the interests of America's law enforcement through legislative and legal advocacy, political action, and education. Founded in 1978, NAPO now represents more than 1,000 police units and associations, 241,000 sworn law enforcement officers, and more than 100,000 citizens who share a common dedication to fair and effective crime control and law enforcement.

Thousands of 9/11 first responders and survivors continue to suffer from serious health conditions from their contact with toxic substances at Ground Zero. These heroes put their lives on the line to serve us, and must be afforded every resource available as they cope with chronic health conditions caused by exposure to toxic chemicals at the World Trade Center.

The James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Reauthorization Act will ensure the continuation of the World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP) and the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund. Reauthorization of these programs is important to tens of thousands of law enforcement officers and first responders who sacrificed their health on 9/11, and during rescue & recovery efforts that followed at Ground Zero, the Pentagon, and Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

Reauthorization of the Zadroga Act is not a "New York issue;" it is a response to a national health crisis. The events of 9/11 devastated the entire country, not just New York City and Washington, D.C., and the health effects are being felt nationwide. Every U.S. State has at least one individual who is registered with the WTCHP; as do 429 of 435 Congressional districts. If not reauthorized, the specialized care for first responders for cancers and other World Trade Center-related health conditions will go away, as well

as any local or regional centers that currently provide medical care for first responders outside of New York State.

Additionally, this year's reauthorization of the Zadroga Act must be a permanent one. A permanent reauthorization will ensure that the WTCHP will continue to be available to the first responders who need it most, and for as long as they need it. The authorization of the original Zadroga Act was limited to five years. In that time, we have seen many of our fellow officers fall to World Trade Center—related illnesses, but we have also seen that the WTCHP is a program that works for law enforcement across the nation, and is working as intended. Failing to permanently reauthorize this program will jeopardize the vital healthcare 9/11 first responders need to survive.

Moreover, this bill will not only reauthorize programs to provide critical medical treatment and compensation for 9/11 heroes, but it will also honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our nation. James Zadroga, a New York City Police Department Detective and member of NAPO, died of respiratory disease caused by his exposure to toxic chemicals at Ground Zero. It is our obligation and duty to remember these heroes and ensure that survivors who risked their lives to protect us continue to receive the treatment and compensation that they deserve.

NAPO stands ready to provide any additional materials you may need as you review this important legislation. If you would like to discuss this issue further, please feel free to contact me at: (703) 549-0775.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William J. Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William J. Johnson
Executive Director