

September 12, 2023

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chair, Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member, Committee on
Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member, Committee on
Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Sirs:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, representing more than 400,000 federal, state, and local law enforcement officers and executives, we write to express our strong support for Section 1087 (“9/11 Responder and Survivor Health Funding Correction Act of 2023”) of the Senate-passed version of H.R. 2670, the FY 2024 National Defense Authorization Act. This provision—which was approved by the Senate on July 27 in a resounding and bipartisan 94 – 4 vote—ensures critical funding for the World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP). We urge that it be retained in the final Conference Report of H.R. 2670.

Yesterday, our nation paused as it does each September 11th to remember the lives lost 22 years ago in New York City, at the Pentagon, and in Shanksville, PA, and to recognize the service of the brave men and women who helped our nation respond to and recover from these deadly terrorist attacks. Each year, the list of those honored at these solemn events has included a growing number of federal, state, and local law enforcement officers who have died of a 9/11-related health condition. This year, for example, the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund honored 62 officers who died of a 9/11-related health condition, joining nearly 330 other 9/11 responders who have been added to the Wall of Remembrance in recent years. Unfortunately, these numbers will only increase as more officers succumb to cancer and other long-term 9/11 health conditions.

For more than a decade, the WTCHP has aided these first responders and their families, operating as Congress intended and as the heroes of 9/11 deserve. However, when the WTCHP was created with bipartisan support by Congress in 2010, and reauthorized in 2015, it contained very specific annual funding limitations. As a result of COVID-19 and rising medical inflation, costs for the program have increased beyond what was anticipated or expected, and the WTCHP faces a critical funding shortfall. Absent congressional action, the WTCHP Administrator has determined that cuts to enrollment, followed by cuts to services, will become necessary in future years.

Last December, Congress in a bipartisan fashion recognized the urgent need to ensure the sustainability of this vital program by providing stop-gap funding in the FY 2023 omnibus spending bill. The additional funding provided by Section 1087 is equally necessary to the

ability of the WTCHP to continue to provide healthcare and services to 9/11 responders and is fully offset. In addition, this provision ensures that all 9/11 responders to the Pentagon and Shanksville who were active-duty military or Defense Department civilian employees will be able to enroll in the Program.

For more than two decades, police officers, firefighters, and EMTs have demonstrated that the World Trade Center Health Program is essential to 9/11 responders. Ensuring the long-term viability of this program is a moral obligation that our nation has to those who went forward in the face of unprecedented danger to protect and serve others. It is for these reasons and many others that we urge the retention of Section 1087 in the final conference agreement on this year's National Defense Authorization Act.

Respectfully,

FBI Agents Association
Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association
Major Cities Chiefs Association
Major County Sheriffs of America
National Association of Police Organizations
National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives
National Sheriffs' Association
National Treasury Employees Union
Sergeants Benevolent Association NYPD
Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI

CC: Members, Senate Committee on Armed Services
Members, House Committee on Armed Services