

9/11 Victims Are Closer to Securing the Long-Term Support They Deserve

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)—the leading post-9/11 veterans empowerment organization—applauded the U.S. House of Representatives for passing the newly renamed Never Forget the Heroes: James Zadroga, Ray Pfeifer, and Luis Alvarez Permanent Authorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Act, which will reauthorize the fund through 2090. Now the bill heads to the U.S. Senate, where Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has agreed to an August vote.

“When former NYPD detective Luis Alvarez testified on Capitol Hill last month, joining fellow first responders and advocates like Jon Stewart, he told Congress that the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund ‘isn’t a ticket to paradise, it’s to provide our families with care,’” said IAVA CEO Jeremy Butler. “For far too long, the long-term prospects of the fund, which is intended to support 9/11 victims who regularly face severe and debilitating medical consequences, has faced political uncertainty. Today, Congress has taken a major step forward to change that. As a long-time champion of the fund, IAVA is grateful that the House of Representatives voted in favor of permanent reauthorization. We urge the Senate to do the same. Like so many 9/11 advocates, Luis was not able to be here to see this through. It’s our shared duty to honor him, and all the victims whose lives were stolen or cut short by that tragic day, by finishing their fight.”

More than 400,000 people have applied to the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund, which covers medical benefits for 9/11-related illnesses. The current law was renewed in 2015 and set to sunset in 2020, but the U.S. Justice Department announced in February that the fund was insufficient to cover all claims and that benefit payments would be cut by up to seventy percent. Today’s reauthorization covers claims for injuries, deaths, and health issues connected to the World Trade Center site for the next seventy years, through 2090. There are more than 21,000 claims pending