



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Senate Passes New Bill To Increase Workers' Comp Benefits For Private Hospital Workers, Emts, Paramedics Dispatched To Ground Zero On 9/11

WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR. October 25, 2007

Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) today announced the New York State Senate last night passed legislation that would increase workers' compensation benefits for private hospital workers, Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's) or paramedics who were dispatched to Ground Zero in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The new bill reflects a 3-way agreement reached with the Governor, the State Senate and State Assembly to clarify a bill that was approved earlier this year by both houses of the Legislature, but subsequently vetoed by the Governor. The Senate overrode the Governor's veto, but the Assembly failed to act.

"Providing these benefits to the brave men and women who responded to Ground Zero after the 9/11 attacks is the least we can do for their heroic service," said Senator Larkin.

The new legislation (S6521) amends the workers' compensation law, in relation to compensation for death, permanent or temporary partial disability, or for permanent or temporary total disability that occurred as a result of rescue activity by an employee of a private voluntary hospital at or in the vicinity of Ground Zero.

This bill increases the salary replacement for disabled first responders to seventy-five percent of their salary at the time of disability and increases workers' compensation survivors benefits for the families of those killed at Ground Zero to reflect the seventy-five percent of salary benefit provided to the disabled under this bill.

The Legislature has acted on a number of occasions since September 11, 2001 to improve benefits for victims of the terrorist attack. Most recently, the Legislature passed and the Governor approved disability pension improvement for a brave New York City firefighter and 9/11 responder killed in action in Iraq.

During the 2004 Session of the Legislature, both houses passed legislation to provide presumptive eligibility for a seventy-five percent of salary disability pension benefit for public employee Ground Zero first responders. The legislation passed for public employees in 2004 does not provide similar relief to private volunteers, primarily emergency medical technicians and paramedics dispatched to Ground Zero.

Claims under this act must be filed with the Workers' Compensation Board within one year from the effective date of this act. The federal government has reappropriated \$125 million to New York State that can be used to provide the increased workers' compensation and death benefits required by this bill.