



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

## Unlimited Sick Leave for NYC 9/11 Responders Passes Legislature

ANDREW GOUNARDES June 24, 2019

| ISSUE: **9/11 FIRST RESPONDERS, 9/11**

Albany, NY– Unlimited sick leave for NYC workers who were 9/11 First Responders, S.5890, passed the legislature in the final day of the session. The bill codifies access to unlimited sick leave for NYC workers who responded to 9/11 and ensures that it cannot be negotiated on a piecemeal basis by a Mayoral administration. The legislation, sponsored by State Senator Andrew Gounardes and Assembly Member Stacey Pheffer Amato, provides stability and guaranteed sick leave benefits for all who responded to 9/11.

In the years since 9/11, at least 10,000 first responders and people around the World Trade Center have been diagnosed with cancer, and at least 2,000 have died. The toll for emergency responders from 9/11-related diseases continues to rise.

“Our City has an obligation to ensure that we support our 9/11 emergency responders with guaranteed, unlimited sick leave. They supported us in our hour of need, and we must do the same for them. Many who ran into the debris to serve their fellow New Yorkers that day have faced heartbreaking health struggles, and we need to guarantee that we are with them every step of the way, instead of forcing them to negotiate for benefits,” said State Senator Andrew Gounardes.

“Those who risked their lives without hesitation running into burning buildings and those who served by returning in the aftermath to save the lives of others, exposed themselves to dangerous chemicals and toxins that have lasting effects. Effects that now, 17 years later, are killing many of the vital personnel who risked their lives, some of whom are not covered by unlimited sick leave,” said Assembly Member Pheffer Amato. “This legislation I sponsored alongside Senator Gounardes, expands coverage to give all of our brave and selfless first responders the access to unlimited sick leave that they not only are entitled to, but deserve. Government should make it easy for our 9/11 heroes suffering through illness and this bill accomplishes that. Thank you to all the first responders, unions, and advocacy groups for their tireless advocacy- without your help this would not have been possible.”

“I want to thank Senator Gounardes and Assembly Member Pheffer Amato for the passage of the sick time bills and the other two 9/11 heroes bills which close loopholes that have been open for too long. Over the last 18 years, we've been facing nothing but obstacles and hurdles, but hopefully first responders are beginning to get the help they deserve. It's our sincere hope the governor signs this immediately,” said John Feal, 9/11 First Responder and Founder of the FealGood Foundation.

“Thanks to Senator Gounardes and Assemblywoman Amato and both Houses of the NYS Legislature, injured and ill 9/11 NYC responders will get the time they need to deal with their 9/11 illnesses. I am certain that Governor Cuomo will sign this bill quickly,” said Benjamin Chevat, Executive Director of 911 Health Watch.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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**2019-S5890**

- 
- Introduced
  
  - - In Committee Assembly
    - In Committee Senate
  
  - - On Floor Calendar Assembly
    - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
  - - Passed Assembly
    - Passed Senate
  
  - Delivered to Governor
  
  - Signed By Governor
  
  -

Relates to sick leave for officers and employees with a qualifying World Trade Center condition

May 16, 2019

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Andrew Gounardes**

Do you support this bill?