

refine that process. We need to be promoting more nuclear. We need to have all the renewables that we can produce; but, unfortunately, there are only a little bit over a percentage today. And many people are holding that out as the answer. I wish that was the answer; I would be all for it. But those that are telling us that we can conserve and renewables will be our energy portfolio are not being honest with the American public.

Just to show you, just a few months ago a bill was introduced in this body that said, if a bird or a bat is found at the foot of a windmill, it would be a criminal act. And that same day I think the Wind Association, and God bless them, I'm for them, but they stated that we would be at 20 percent of the energy portfolio in a very short time, I think in 10 years. I wish that was true, but it's not true. We can't get there that quick. The wind only blows a portion of the time, and we have not been able to store the energy and keep it and use it later. It only blows part of the time. We have to have a redundant source, clean green natural gas, and a complete portfolio for America so we can have jobs in America, so Americans can heat their homes, run their businesses, and compete in the world economy. We can compete with anybody if we're given a fair shake; but we must have available, affordable energy if America is going to continue to be a leader of the world.

THE TIME IS NOW TO SUPPORT HEROES OF 9/11

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. I thank the Speaker from the great State of New York for yielding me this time on this incredibly important issue.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we approach the sixth anniversary of the tragic events of September 11, I appreciate the opportunity to speak today about one of the most important issues facing my district, my hometown of New York City and our Nation.

I am so proud to be here today with my colleague and good friend from Manhattan, JERRY NADLER, who has been a tireless advocate for everyone who has become sick from the toxins of 9/11. His district includes Ground Zero, and our work together on this issue can truly move this forward.

I want to note that a number of New Yorkers will be with me today, Congressman FOSSELLA, YVETTE CLARKE, JOHN HALL, ELIOT ENGEL, AND STEVE ISRAEL, if he was not in the Chair being the Speaker, he would be down here on the floor talking about the six men and women from 9/11 who need our help, and possibly Chairman PALLONE.

Mr. Speaker, the death toll from 9/11 is still growing, and the nightmare of

that day has continued for thousands of our fellow Americans who are suffering with illnesses and injuries caused by the attacks, but are not getting the help they need.

When people hear that the men and women who rushed in to save the lives of others on that terrible day, who worked to clean up the site, who worked in construction, I remember that day there were signs everywhere, "iron workers, report for duty," retired workers, all workers to the site. These men and women rushed to the site thinking of others, not of themselves; and many of them are sick and they need our help now.

The collapse of the World Trade Center towers took nearly 3,000 lives in an instant and released a massive cloud of asbestos, pulverized concrete and other poisons. These toxins have sickened thousands and have killed at least eight, but likely dozens more Americans, in the years since 9/11.

On 9/11, 500 of my neighbors and constituents lost their lives. That was more than any other district. We lost up to 3,000 people, but thousands and thousands more lost their health; and we need to be there to help them now.

The gray dust that billowed through Lower Manhattan that day is said to have been as caustic as drain cleaner. It settled in the homes of Lower Manhattan, in downtown schools, playgrounds and parks, and in the lungs of tens of thousands of Americans. These forgotten victims of 9/11 either lived or worked downtown, courageously volunteered for rescue and recovery operations at Ground Zero, or merely happened to be in Lower Manhattan, a school child, a worker, on one of the worst mornings our country has ever known. And right now, more than 6,500 responders, truly the heroes and heroines of 9/11, are being treated for 9/11-related health problems through the federally funded World Trade Center Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program. And more than 5,000 have been referred for mental health care, often for conditions like post-traumatic stress syndrome. Every month, another 500 to 1,000 responders sign up for health monitoring, and those coming in are more sick than ever before.

In all, more than 70,000 Americans reported to the World Trade Center Health Registry, and they were near Ground Zero in the days following 9/11 and have serious concerns about their health.

As you would expect, the majority of those registered are from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. But what many people may not know is that more than 10,000 Americans from outside the tri-state area have also signed up for the registry. Amazingly, every single State and 431 of the 435 congressional districts nationwide have someone in the World Trade Center Registry in New York City. This is a health emergency on a national scale, and it requires a strong Federal response.

This Saturday at Ground Zero, many of us on the floor here this afternoon

will be joining the working men and women of New York City's labor movement in a rally to send a message loud and clear that the time is now to support our heroes of 9/11. Six years is long enough.

Along with the New York State AFL-CIO, the New York City Central Labor Council and the Building and Construction Trades Council, we will be showing honor, support and respect for the contributions and sacrifices of the heroes and heroines of 9/11. And we will be rallying for action from the government to care for the thousands of people who have become sick because of the toxins of Ground Zero.

With the strong support of the AFL-CIO, Representative NADLER and I are preparing to introduce, along with Congressman FOSSELLA and many others, new comprehensive legislation to do just that. The 9/11 Health and Compensation Act will ensure that everyone exposed to the Ground Zero toxins has a right to be medically monitored, and all who are sick as a result have a right for treatment.

It will build on the expertise of the Centers for Excellence, which are currently providing high-quality care to thousands of responders and ensuring an ongoing data collection and analysis, expanding care to the entire exposed community.

The bill also includes care for area residents, workers, and school children, as well as the thousands of people that came from across the country to assist with recovery and clean-up efforts.

Finally, it provides compensation for economic damages and loss by reopening the September 11, 2001 Victims Compensation Fund. I have been working for years to make this happen, along with all of the members of the New York delegation. And I am very proud to be working with Representative NADLER, with the strong support of the New York AFL-CIO, to move this comprehensive, bipartisan bill through Congress.

We are united as a delegation; we are united with labor; we are united at the various levels of government, and we are truly committed. We will not stop, and we will continue to work every single day and hour to make sure that this happens. Six years, six long years is long enough for the men and women who are sick because they rushed into burning buildings to save the lives of others, to work on a deadly pile where the toxins infected their lungs.

Once again, the 9/11 health crisis is a national emergency that was caused by an attack on our country. Only the Federal Government has the resources and the reach to properly address the health and compensation needs of thousands of Americans from across this Nation whose health was compromised by the World Trade Center attacks.

I must say that we would not have moved forward as we have with some funding and some help without the complete support of the Democratic

leadership. Chairman OBEY, who has put money in the appropriations bill, Speaker NANCY PELOSI, who has met with the sick and injured workers many, many times here in the Capitol, along with Majority Leader STENY HOYER and others. This is a united Democratic and Republican effort to help the sick people that are sick because of the attack on America.

The solutions I have outlined this afternoon are neither easy nor inexpensive, but they are part of our country's moral obligation. As the wealthiest country in the world, it is our duty to care for those who responded to an act of war. These were the first veterans of the act of war. They are veterans; they should be treated with health care. We must take care of the people who took care of us following 9/11. Many risked their lives, and many, many more risked their health. It is the least we can do as a grateful Nation. The time to act is now. Six years is long enough.

I would now like to recognize my colleague and dear friend from the Lower East Side who has been a tireless advocate for everyone who has become sick from the toxins. His district includes Ground Zero. And our work together on this issue can truly move this issue forward.

Congressman NADLER is recognized for 5 minutes.

□ 1545

Mr. NADLER. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I must say that I am from the Upper West Side, not the Lower East Side, although my district does cover part of the Lower East Side, and that is certainly no insult.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. We are all in it together, East Side, West Side, all around the town. All around the Nation, really.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I do thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I want to thank her for her leadership on this issue. I am pleased that we will soon be introducing legislation together to provide long-term health care to all the first responders, residents, area workers and students who have become sick as a result of the collapse of the World Trade Center. Our legislation will build on the efforts of the Centers of Excellence of New York City and will extend to people who came from all over the country to aid in the massive rescue and recovery effort after 9/11.

When the World Trade Center collapsed on that sunny morning 6 years ago, a plume of poisonous dust blanketed lower Manhattan, and not just Lower Manhattan, but parts of Brooklyn and possibly Jersey City, too. The cloud was a toxic mixture of lead, dioxin, asbestos, mercury, benzene, PCBs and other hazardous contaminants that swirled around the site where the World Trade Center once stood. The cloud blanketed the area as rescue and recovery workers worked around the clock. Many did so without adequate or without any protective

gear. Thousands of first responders inhaled this poisonous dust before it settled onto and into countless homes, shops and office buildings in the area.

For the past 6 years, we have demanded that the EPA fulfill its legal mandate to protect the public health by telling the truth about post-9/11 air quality and by implementing a scientifically sound testing and cleanup program to address indoor contamination. They have absolutely failed on both fronts.

While America watched these brave men and women working fearlessly at the World Trade Center site, their government failed them and continues to fail them. As the Nation and the world united in solidarity, our government, this administration, put politics over science and safety.

Federal law mandates that when there is a terrorist attack in which toxins are released into the air, both the Environmental Protection Agency and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration have specific responsibilities. EPA is charged with the cleanup and is the lead agency to deal with the pollution. The American public deserves to know why and how that did not happen. We are getting some answers though, painstakingly.

As Chair of the Subcommittee on Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, I chaired a hearing in June on the failures of the Federal Government in responding to the environmental crisis that resulted from the World Trade Center attacks. Senator CLINTON held a companion hearing in the Senate. At the hearing we heard for the first time from Christine Todd Whitman, the former administrator of the EPA, who said her agency did nothing wrong, that they were honest with the public and that they listened to their scientists. But we know that EPA lied and to this day continues lying. We know that early tests revealed high levels of asbestos and other toxins and that EPA in statements vetted through the White House misled the public with their assurances that the air was safe to breathe. Independent scientists who testified in the hearing said that no amount of asbestos should be considered safe and that everyone knew that those buildings contained asbestos, hundreds of thousands of pounds of it before the buildings collapsed and released it into the air.

Indeed, there is no doubt that thousands of people are sick as a result of the contamination at the World Trade Center. Thousands of people are sick who would not be sick today if they had not been lied to by their own government and worked without protection on the pile for 13 and 14 and 15 weeks.

A study by Mount Sinai Hospital found that 70 percent of the more than 9,000 first responders who were studied suffered health problems related to their work at Ground Zero. These health problems include things like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease,

interstitial lung diseases and reactive airway disease.

A recent New York Times article highlighted the clear link between the World Trade Center dust and life-threatening diseases. The article cited the report from doctors from the Fire Department of New York and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, which again confirms what we have known for years, that we are facing a major health crisis as a result of September 11.

These studies do not even address the students at Stuyvesant High School and the Borough of Manhattan Community Colleges, schools that sat near piles of debris from the Towers, the nearby residents' apartments still contain poisonous dust or the thousands of people that work in offices that were never properly cleaned. These factors combined present an unprecedented challenge to public health not just to New York City but across the country.

In the days and weeks after 9/11, workers and volunteers came from across the country to help. The great citizens of this country came together, but the Federal Government has failed in its obligations. To this day there has been no comprehensive testing and cleanup of the affected areas, and to this day, there is no adequate provision for long-term monitoring of health care of the people who suffered in the aftermath of the World Trade Center disaster.

Now we are making, finally, small strides in providing health care to those who became ill. The emergency supplemental appropriations bill passed earlier this year because of the efforts of Mrs. MALONEY and myself and other members of the New York delegation included \$50 million for 9/11 health needs. The 2008 House Labor-HHS appropriations bill includes \$50 million for the World Trade Center monitoring and treatment program.

I was also extremely pleased to learn from Senator CLINTON that the Senate appropriations subcommittee has included \$55 million in their version of the labor appropriations bill. The Senate version of the bill includes funding for residents, offices of commercial workers, volunteers and students. I hope the House will follow suit in making Federal funding available for residents too.

But much more remains to be done. The estimates of the costs are not \$50 million a year but starting at \$198 million and expanding to \$400 million a year as more people become sick in the next few years. And we need to develop a comprehensive approach to 9/11 health that includes residents, nonfirst responder workers and school children. We need to secure funding that is not subject to the yearly appropriations battle. We must commit ourselves to act and to help all of those who are still waiting. That is why we are going to introduce the bill that Mrs. MALONEY referred to a few minutes ago to provide a long-term comprehensive

funding source, a bill that I hope this House will consider.

But in addition, there's a second cover-up. I have always said there are two cover-ups conducted here. One about the health care disaster that followed 9/11; that cover-up has unraveled. In the last year with the revelations of the Mount Sinai study, the New York Daily News reports and other reports that have come out, now everybody recognizes that first responders and residents are suffering, thousands and thousands of them, because of the air pollution after 9/11, because of the government lying to them and saying that the air was safe to breathe and therefore they didn't use respiratory equipment or they were there in the first place when they shouldn't have been, not the first responders, but residents who could have gone elsewhere. But that was one cover-up that has now unraveled, and we have been talking about what to do about it and how to provide long-term medical monitoring and long-term care for it, and that is the legislation we are talking about.

But there was and is a second cover-up, and that cover-up is the fact that the indoor spaces that were polluted were never properly cleaned up. A GAO report, which Senator CLINTON and Mrs. MALONEY and I unveiled yesterday, pointed out that the EPA to this day cannot guarantee that any single building, except for its own building which it cleaned up properly at 290 Broadway, other than that, they cannot guarantee that any single building in Lower Manhattan is clean today and does not contain toxins that are slowly poisoning people on and on.

The EPA never properly cleaned up, nor did the City of New York, indoor spaces. Nature cleans up the outdoor spaces. The rain washes the stuff away. The wind blows the toxins away. Nothing cleans up indoor spaces. The EPA Inspector General reported in 2003, it is 4 years ago already, that the so-called cleanup the EPA conducted in 2002 was a phony, that it didn't clean up anything adequately. And they said that what had to be done, the EPA Inspector General, was that the EPA should inspect several hundred indoor spaces, apartments, residences in concentric circles going out from the World Trade Center to find out where the contamination is, maybe 3 blocks in one direction, maybe 3 miles in another. And wherever they found the contamination, they had to go in and clean up every single building in those areas. That may cost money, but until that happens, the babies crawling on the rug 10 years from now or today will be poisoned. The people living in those apartments, working in those spaces, will be poisoned, and we will reap the bitter harvest 10 and 15 and 20 years from now with thousands of unnecessary and preventable cases of mesothelioma and lung cancer and asbestosis.

Mr. Speaker, it is our job to do two things. If we are going to be true to what we have said to the heroes and

about the heroes of 9/11, we must do two things. We must provide legislation and funding for long-term monitoring and health care such as that that Mrs. MALONEY and I and others have been talking about in the legislation that we are introducing. We must also prevail upon the administration, by legislation if necessary, to do the proper indoor testing the way the EPA Inspector General said, and then to do proper cleanup. Not a cleanup that the EPA's own scientific advisory panel says is a joke and a fraud, not the cleanup that the EPA's Inspector General says is a joke and a fraud, a proper cleanup that does the entire building, that looks at all pollutants, not just asbestos, that is not limited geographically to below Canal Street, but wherever the contamination went as scientifically determined.

These are what we must do. If we do these things, we are true to the survivors and the heroes, and we will learn so that, God forbid, when there is another disaster, natural or manmade, we will do it properly and we will not have thousands of people with preventable illnesses and shortened lives as a result of our malfeasance or carelessness.

So I thank Mrs. MALONEY for arranging this special order. I thank her for her leadership and in bringing to all our attention the struggle and the continuing health problems caused by 9/11 and in helping to craft legislation to deal with it.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. I thank the gentleman for his leadership and for his moving statement.

Mr. Speaker, the New York Daily News editorial board won the Pulitzer Prize for its groundbreaking series of editorials entitled "9/11, The Forgotten Victims" which documented the growing medical fallout from the World Trade Center attacks. Since this is really about the sick heroes and heroines of 9/11, not about legislation or legislators, I would like to share an excerpt from this award-winning series. This is from part 1 of the series entitled, "Abandoned Heroes," which was originally published in 2006.

I quote, "They cough, they wheeze, their heads and faces pound with the pressure of swollen sinuses. They lose their breath with minor exertion. They suffer the suffocation of asthma and diseases that attack the very tissues of their lungs. They endure acid reflux, a painful indigestion that never goes away. They are haunted by the mental and emotional traumas of having witnessed horror. Many are too disabled to work. And some have died."

Mr. Speaker, I now yield 5 minutes to my colleague and friend from the other side of the aisle, the gentleman from New York, VITO FOSSELLA, who has worked very hard to get funding for the heroes of 9/11, including \$25 million in the President's budget.

Mr. FOSSELLA. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and I thank her for her efforts to date on being one of the strongest and one of the most vocal ad-

vocates for ensuring that the people who, regrettably, either are not known about or too often are forgotten, those are the folks that have been represented so well by Mrs. MALONEY and mentioned by Mr. NADLER, people who are suffering today.

There is one thing I know about the American people. If they know that their fellow citizens are suffering, especially those who responded to that tragedy on 9/11, they will be willing to help. So I think it is part of our job, a very important role here is that we continue to inform not just the Congress, but really, by extension, the American people that there are thousands of people who need our help.

As we approach the sixth anniversary of 9/11, it is time to reaffirm our commitment of never forgetting. As was mentioned, we may forget too much here in Washington. All of those who worked, lived and went to school in Lower Manhattan, who breathed in the toxic air created by the destruction of the Towers, many of them are suffering tragically from health effects. A New York City Health Department study shows an increased incidence of asthma for those that worked at the pile. A Department of Health and Human Services study shows that illnesses that are a result of exposure to 9/11 toxins are definitely on the rise. As this problem grows, progress on coming to a solution can be measured only in small steps rather than giant leaps as critical needs continue to be unmet after 6 years. In fairness, in the last 2 years or so, we have had some progress: \$125 million from the Federal Government, of which \$75 million went for treatment, that was for the first time, working with Mrs. MALONEY in particular; getting the creation of a health czar by the name of Dr. John Howard to help coordinate and minister the Federal response.

□ 1600

As was mentioned, there was \$50 million in the appropriations bill. But so much more needs to be done, and I think a stronger Federal response is appropriate. We fought across party lines. After all, this is not a Democrat or Republican issue; this is just about people coming together to help our Federal citizens to ensure that an adequate Federal plan is put into place.

We have a step in the right direction, and we need to keep the momentum going. That is why we are working to help draft legislation that addresses several key areas to help our heroes who are sick today, as well as anyone who falls ill in the future. One of the alarming trends that we see is that according to anyone you talk to with knowledge, it is beyond anecdotal. We can all tell stories of individuals who we know, young firefighters who ran a 6-minute mile in their thirties and forties and now have trouble walking up a flight of stairs.

The clinic that deals with the fire department in the City of New York that

sees on a regular basis firefighters has already evaluated more than 14,000 firefighters. That is 14,000 firefighters. That doesn't include the more than 55,000 people on the registry.

As we speak, there are 3,000 firefighters who are seeking mental health counseling and 2,000 who go for regular check-ups for their physical well-being, pulmonary problems, respiratory problems, the World Trade Center cough, asthma. The list goes on, not even to go into the cancer-related illnesses that we think may spring up in the future. I say that because many illnesses will not manifest themselves for another 15 or 20 or 25 years.

Is it the right thing to do for America to turn its back on young men and women who really gave their all on that day, who ran into burning buildings to try to save others, who stayed on the pile week in and week out? Are we really doing the right thing by saying they might not get to see their grandchildren or their kids go to school or to graduations or weddings?

I don't think it is the right thing to do, which is why I think this legislation is so important. When you think about the number of people on the registry, 71,000, maybe not all of them are sick, but let's suppose half of them are. That is larger than many small towns and cities and villages across the United States. They are actively under review for health care problems.

We know the Department of Health and Human Services revealed that 6,500 responders, and I mentioned within the fire department, but in total 6,500 responders are currently being treated for 9/11-related health problems through the federally funded World Trade Center Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program, and another 500 to 1,000 additional responders are signing up each month.

I know we have a wonderful gift in this country to be compassionate, to take care of those in need. I think our roles here, with my colleagues Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. NADLER, so many across the New York delegation, I just think it is our role to speak loudly, convincingly, working with the AFL-CIO in New York.

We will be getting together Saturday at Ground Zero to call attention once again and to reaffirm our commitment never to forget.

On a very personal level, I know too many people across Staten Island and Brooklyn who were willing to risk their lives. I know many who risked their lives and gave their lives on September 11. But the untold story, and it will be told for years and years to come, are so many young people who stayed there for the recovery and rescue effort and now need our help. This Federal legislation that we are proposing and soon to be introducing will help them give a degree of certainty.

Finally, we mentioned the new clinic alone on Staten Island that will make it more convenient for firefighters. How important it is for treatment and

monitoring to go hand-in-hand. It is one thing to give these individuals a level of assurance that the treatment will be there. Another is the financial implications. It is not unusual for a firefighter to have copayments for prescription medication, not available in generic, of \$2,600 a year because of having to respond to Ground Zero after 9/11.

Two thousand six hundred dollars is a lot of money, especially to a firefighter. We should be there to help offset that cost. And the monitoring is important because of the fear and the concern, the fear and the concern that the more debilitating, more severe illnesses will manifest themselves. I talk of leukemia or blood illnesses or cancers.

That is why it is so essential that we get this plan put in place and that the Federal Government and the United States of America not turn its back on the thousands of people who need our help.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that we are now approaching the sixth anniversary and there are a number of committees here in the House that will be looking closely at this issue.

I want to thank Chairman PALLONE of the Health Subcommittee on Energy and Commerce for holding a very important hearing on the health effects on the day of the anniversary. Many of his constituents rushed down to Ground Zero in the aftermath of 9/11, and they are now very sick. In fact, one of the Centers of Excellence providing monitoring and treatment to sick workers is located in Congressman PALLONE's district.

There will be no greater champion, no one more important for the sick workers of 9/11 than FRANK PALLONE and Chairman DINGELL. I thank them for their hard work.

Also, Chairman TOWNS, my dear friend from Brooklyn, will be holding a field hearing in New York City on Monday in his Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Government Management. This is the third hearing this year that the chairman has held on making sure that everyone exposed to the deadly toxins is monitored and everyone who is sick is treated. His dedication to helping the residents, area workers and schoolchildren and those who came from across the country to help is tremendous.

Last, our friend and true leader in the Congress, Chairman MILLER of the Education and Labor Committee, is delving into why workers were not protected while working at and around Ground Zero. On Wednesday of next week his full committee will hold an important hearing, the first in a series, with the second focusing on why workers were not protected after Hurricane Katrina. I thank my dear friend for his ongoing focus and support for this issue.

It is clear that this Congress will not allow the heroes of 9/11 to go longer

without the care they need and deserve. Six years is long enough.

We now have one of our other distinguished colleagues from New York, STEVE ISRAEL. He serves on the Appropriations Committee. Along with Chairman OBEY, he worked to secure \$100 million in this year's budget for the sick workers. We thank him for his commitment and support.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my dear friend and colleague from the State of New York, Congressman ISRAEL.

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished friend and partner in this critically important project, and I thank her for her leadership on this legislation. I know that she has been so dedicated and so devoted to this cause.

Mr. Speaker, on September 11, the President of the United States spoke to the Nation, and here is what he said: "The American people have faced other grave crises in their history—with American courage, and with American resolution. They will do no less today."

I am not talking about President Bush saying those words on September 11. Believe it or not, Mr. Speaker, I am talking about President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who said those words on September 11, 1941, 60 years before the attacks on our Nation.

We have witnessed that resolution and that courage all around us since September 11. We witness it almost every day in our own interactions with the rescue workers, with the first responders, with those who could have fled and gone in another direction, but instead showed up and said that they wanted to help.

I know of an ironworker, Mr. Speaker, his name is John Sferazo. John Sferazo went to Ground Zero to help. He refused to leave. Today, John Sferazo's voice sounds like gravel. His breathing is labored. His chest hurts him. I know that my friend is well aware of John Sferazo.

John Sferazo contracted some very serious medical problems at Ground Zero. He probably knew then that he would have these problems. But still he didn't leave. He stayed there. And as a result of his courage and his commitment, his resolution and his determination, today his breathing is labored, it is difficult for him to speak. Our obligation to John Sferazo is to make sure we take care of him, to monitor his health, to improve his quality of life, to take care of him, because when the time came, he was there to take care of us.

I know of another worker, Mr. Speaker. I met him at a Ground Zero workers conference in my congressional district at the State University of New York at Farmingdale. I met him about a year ago.

I was a speaker at that conference; and as I was leaving, he stopped me in the lobby, and this is what he said. He said, Congressman, I am not sure I am going to be here next year. I am embarrassed to say, Mr. Speaker, that I thought he was saying that he wasn't

sure he could attend the conference next year.

I said, Well, I am sure that you will be able to come back. He said, No, you don't understand. I'm not sure I am going to be alive next year, is what he said. He said, What I am supposed to do with my family? Who is going to take care of them?

It may sound melodramatic, Mr. Speaker, but these are real people. Can you imagine doing what you thought was the best thing you could do, serving your country, serving your colleagues, going to Ground Zero, sacrificing yourself, and now you are not sure you are going to be around a year from now?

What is our obligation to these people? Our obligation is to take care of them and to take care of their families. Our obligation is to make sure that they get the health care that they need. Our obligation is to let them know that we will not forget them.

I will close by suggesting that next week many of us in Congress will attend 9/11 ceremonies. I plan after votes to fly home to be at Commack High School in my district for a 9/11 vigil. We are going to light the candles, and we are going to talk about what a grievous day that was and our commitment to having a strong Nation.

But, really, we should not think about these people just on 9/11. This should not be an anniversary commemoration. The legislation that the gentlewoman has introduced with my friends from New York will make sure that this is not just an annual commemoration, but that every single day, those workers who were there on 9/11 at Ground Zero get the health care that they need and that we are securing their future.

We had faced a crisis that day, a national crisis. They face a crisis every day, a personal crisis; and it is up to us to help and to secure their future.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman again for her leadership.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for raising the issue of his two constituents with whom he has worked. It brings a personal face on the tragic horror that many people confront.

I also want to particularly commend him for his work on the Appropriations Committee. In addition to the comprehensive legislation that we are jointly putting in as a delegation, Mr. ISRAEL and others on the Appropriations Committee have taken a lead in providing funding. In recent months, because of his efforts and those of others, we have passed appropriations bills to make sure that federally financed 9/11 health clinics, including those run by Mount Sinai and the New York City Fire Department, do not have to shut their doors because of lack of funding.

We included \$50 million for 9/11 health clinics in the recent war supplemental spending measure and the House-passed Labor-HHS appropriations bill. This was done by Mr.

ISRAEL's committee. I mentioned a moment ago that this included another \$50 million for 9/11 health needs. In the Senate version of the Labor-HHS bill, Senators CLINTON, SCHUMER and others have gotten \$55 million into the Senate bill. So when this appropriations bill gets signed into law, we in Congress will have provided at least \$100 million for 9/11 health needs this year alone.

This is a very good start. Thank you so much, STEVE. It is a testimony to the leadership not only of STEVE, but of the two Senators, our entire New York delegation, our Democratic leadership, and I would say very importantly, I would say Congressman OBEY, for his leadership in this battle for funding. We will continue the fight to ensure that the heroes of 9/11 have access to the health care that they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I now yield to my distinguished colleague and friend, JOHN HALL, of New York's Nineteenth District. He represents the Hudson Valley. He has just been elected to Congress, but he is fighting just as hard as all of us who have suffered from 9/11 to make sure that the health care needs of the wounded are taken care of. I thank him for joining me in this Special Order and for his hard work.

Mr. HALL of New York. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and my colleagues from New York for carrying this important legislation forward.

Mr. Speaker, Tuesday marks the sixth-year anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. September 11 is truly a dark day in America's history and a personal tragedy for those who lost family and friends in the attacks.

□ 1615

But out of that dark day, however, we saw the spirit of the American people. Immediately following the attack, people around the country lined up to donate blood and raised money for the victims' families. Every congressional district and every State saw people, first responders and just ordinary citizens, get on planes and get in cars to rush to Ground Zero to help work on the remains of the World Trade Center.

In New York, first responders, many of whom lived in my district, rushed into the burning World Trade Center towers to save whomever they could. Immediately after the attacks, we saw firefighters, police and volunteers line up and work 24-hour shifts sorting through the rubble looking for survivors.

And when it was clear that no one would come out of that rubble alive, those responders remained at the scene determined that no one would be left behind in the rubble.

Whenever a body was removed, the stirring sight of everyone coming to a stop and honoring and showing their respect to the flag-covered body as it was removed is an image that will stay with all of us as we move forward through our history.

Slowly we came to realize that those magnificent people who worked at

Ground Zero were being exposed to harmful toxins, with significant risks to their health. Despite the heroic acts of our first responders, National Guard reservists and even volunteers, the Federal Government has failed 6 years later to provide comprehensive medical screening and medical care to those who were injured in service to our country at Ground Zero. We have failed to provide a comprehensive plan to monitor and treat those who lived and work in the immediate areas around Ground Zero even after we realized that the air they were breathing might be toxic.

Earlier this year I had graduates of Stuyvesant High School in New York City come and ask for my support in providing health care for themselves and their classmates because of the medical problems they had encountered after 9/11.

Despite assurances that their school was safe and the air was clean, when they returned less than a month after the attacks, multiple students from Stuyvesant have faced serious health care issues, including Amit Friedlander, who was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease and has been battling the cancer.

The Federal Government made a serious mistake and exposed these children and young adults to dangerous toxins. It is well past time that we correct this mistake and provide the care these children and volunteers need.

That is why I am proud to say I will be an original cosponsor of the Maloney-Nadler-Fossella 9/11 Health and Compensation Act. This bill will take a vital step towards providing the care those affected at 9/11 deserve. It is my hope and belief that the New York delegation will unite around this bill and the House of Representatives will unite to act on its passage.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his statement and for his cosponsorship and his leadership on this very important issue. I know that your district also includes men and women who rushed to the site to help others. Thank you so much.

I am now proud to yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. WEINER) who has been a tireless advocate, along with JERRY NADLER and others, for everyone who has become sick from the toxins of 9/11.

Mr. WEINER. I thank the gentlelady for this time and for her leadership. This is an issue that you would think, from around the country when people gaze upon the memorials that will take place on September 11, for most Americans to realize how many people who responded that day are not being cared for, they would be stunned and surprised.

We have a great many ideological debates that go on in this Chamber. We have a great many arguments about philosophy and what government should or should not do.

It should be the source of no contention, it should be the source of no real

debate, that people who rushed to help their fellow citizens on that day, whether they be at Ground Zero or the fields of Pennsylvania, whether they be at the Pentagon, those people should be honored, of course, but they also should be cared for.

And yet years later, day by day, victims of September 11 are dying. It is easy for us to remember, those of us from New York, about how that day was such a heart-wrenching day and how it was also uplifting to see how many Americans, like the gentlelady said earlier, people drove from miles around. The West Side Highway was largely closed, and parked on the sides of the roads were license plates from all around the country of people who said I am going to go and try to help.

What that help consisted of in the weeks after September 11 was standing on a pile of rubble with buckets and paper masks and people lifting large pieces of stone and the rubble trying desperately to find anyone who could be saved.

If we fast-forward to today, you realize many of those people are dying. They are dying difficult deaths. It has been argued by some that we don't know exactly what the cause of those deaths are. Well, that is not true. A lot of the monitoring has been done. A lot of the studies that have been done by medical experts in New York City and the hospitals in the area, we know with some certitude what happened, and the things we are finding in the lungs of those that are dying is very clear that it came from that horrific day.

We also have heard from some who say we don't know how expensive this could be. It could be untold millions and millions of dollars. Well, the first thing is to try to get some sense of responsibility, and I believe it is largely a Federal responsibility, and I think that debate, frankly, belittles the strength of the Federal Government and the idea that this was an attack on our Federal Government.

But we do have some sense of what the costs are going to be. Now we need to start to say one final thing. We know what the cost is to some degree. We know what the cause is with near certitude. We are going to accept the responsibility to take care of these people. It seems to me intuitive, and yet here we are 6 years later still having this discussion. And I think, as I said earlier, we can have large discussions about how you provide health care in this country, and I am willing to engage in that. We can have discussions about how we should make our country safer so we don't have a September 11 again. We should have those types of discussions.

But as long as we can all embrace the idea this is the responsibility of government to take care of these people because they did not run to that pile waving their Blue Cross/Blue Shield card or waving their Medicare card or waving their union membership, they just showed up and did what they were

asked to do. Sometimes they did much more than they were asked to do.

I firmly believe that many of those who are dying today, even if they knew that if they did it again they would die, they would still do it. That was the kind of sense, that was the kind of pathos that existed that day. People were so eager to do whatever they could, they were willing to make sacrifices.

But the question becomes: Should we let them pay that price? Should we let them, day by day, as we just saw yesterday, two more police officers died from 9/11-related diseases, should we let it happen? And the answer is "no."

I want to end the way I began, by offering my congratulations and thanks to the gentlelady from New York.

This is a difficult issue, because as much as people would like to say that they are doing everything to honor those victims of September 11, we know in this Chamber that there are some people who are steadfastly pushing back every single day. And Mr. NADLER and the gentlewoman from New York, and many members of the New York delegation, but none more than the two of them, have fought every day to keep this on the front burner.

Every year now on September 11, we are going to cast our memory time immemorial back to September 11, 2001. Let this be the last year we have to mark this day by pointing out the shoddy treatment of those who rushed to Ground Zero to volunteer.

I know that the gentlelady has communicated this to Speaker PELOSI and she has been very supportive of this. Let's hope we can find the type of bipartisan consensus that is truly reflected in this country in paying honor to the memory of those that were lost and paying honor to the sacrifice of those still with us.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. I thank the gentleman very much for his leadership not only on this bill but on many others that help the 9/11 survivors. He has been a leader on the Judiciary Committee on the 9/11 immigration bill which will be on the floor on 9/11 and hopefully will pass.

It is now my pleasure to yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. CLARKE). YVETTE CLARKE was elected to the New York City Council the year of 9/11 where she served as the Chair of the Women's Committee and held many important positions. She now represents the 11th Congressional District representing central Brooklyn. Thank you for being here today and for your statement.

Ms. CLARKE. Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking the gentlelady from New York for her relentless efforts on behalf of the victims, heroes and heroines of the World Trade Center attack and aftermath. I am joining my colleagues on the floor in pursuit of justice for the second-generation victims of the wicked attack of our Nation in New York City on September 11 and to demand basic health care support and

services for those whose physical well-being was adversely and irreparably impacted by the horrific attack on the World Trade Center.

As was stated by the gentlelady from New York, I was elected to the New York City Council the year our dear city was attacked. I became Chair of the Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice Services, as well as a member of the Health Committee where we examined year after year what the impact of the aftermath, the work that our first responders, the residents of the area were feeling as a result of having been misguided, misled by our own Federal Government through the leadership, or lack of leadership some would say, of the administration through the Environmental Protection Agency which said to New Yorkers that the air we were breathing was okay and that we would be fine, only to find out that today many are diseased.

I also watched as a very close friend, a very best friend and companion of mine, rushed out on September 11 to the pile, a member of Local 79, who heard the call. And as I speak with him each and every day, I am reminded that he is one of the lucky ones. But every now and then when he coughs, I wonder could this be the advent of a serious health crisis that was precipitated by his heroism on that day.

I cannot fathom why on the advent of the 6th anniversary of this most tragic event in our history this administration has not seen fit to do right by its most courageous citizenry. This is a problem that not only affects many thousands of people throughout the New York region, but also countless thousands throughout the country who bravely came to New York City and helped my hometown in our time of need.

Immediately following the attack and imminent collapse of the World Trade Center, first responders, construction workers and volunteers from across every economic sector and walk of life converged upon what we know as Ground Zero to perform search and rescue missions.

From the outset, these heroic individuals went in without a second thought about their own personal well-being. They just wanted to save anyone who might have been buried alive and/or to help recover the bodies of those who had perished, heroes and heroines, without whose efforts New York City and our Nation never could have recovered as quickly as it did.

Later, many of these same workers went through the lengthy process of cleaning up the demolished site. At the time, the EPA declared the air to be safe to breathe, a statement we now know to have been false. Because of their efforts in helping our country to recover, these men and women ingested vast amounts of toxic dust and harmful chemicals. The result is a plague of debilitating and deadly diseases, some of which are rarely seen in nature. Only now, 6 years later, are many of these

diseases and complications showing themselves. In fact, many of the people who spent time near the site may not show any problems until several years further down the line. Even the best experts have no clue just how many of these individuals will actually fall ill of long-term complications from the exposure.

Of course we cannot change the past so there is nothing anyone can do about exposure that already took place. All we can do now is make sure that these victims receive the medical treatment they deserve. Bureaucratic red tape and legal challenges have left these second generation victims overwhelmed by deteriorating health as well as a lack of meaningful financial support from a grateful Nation. Many are going bankrupt under the weight of escalating health costs and the loss of income to their homes and families. And what about the families?

Furthermore, there has been no assistance offered to the many non-responders who worked on the scene and the area residents who breathed the tainted air that entered their homes. These people are also victims of the attacks, and require support for health problems that are only now manifesting.

This is why I am compelled to add my name and wholehearted support behind the Maloney-Nadler-Fossella 9/11 Health Compensation Act. This comprehensive bill establishes programs to monitor and treat everyone exposed to the dangerous toxins found at Ground Zero.

Whether you are a police officer or firefighter, construction worker, area resident, government employee or anyone else who spent significant time at the scene, you are entitled to treatment for any disease that doctors find is linked to your work immediately after the attacks.

Some of my colleagues from outside the New York region may wonder why they should support such a bill. They say it does nothing for their own States or districts, so why bother voting for it.

□ 1630

I feel the reasons could not be clearer. The diseases being developed by victims of Ground Zero are horrid. Already well over 100 deaths have been partially attributed to toxins from the site. Not long ago, a 34-year-old detective collapsed and died while playing with his young daughter due to complications from exposure. There are victims requiring double lung transplants because of damage caused from dust and chemicals. Others develop rare cancers.

These people are heroes to the Nation. They went in and helped resuscitate not just a city but an entire country that had been shocked, frozen, traumatized and unsure of how to react. It should be a matter of national honor to help these victims who have rushed in where we all rushed out.

I wholeheartedly support the Maloney-Nadler-Fossella bill as a co-sponsor, and I look forward to joining my colleagues and the AFL-CIO this weekend at the World Trade Center site as we rally in support of fulfilling victims' long-term health care needs.

I thank the gentlewoman from New York for her extraordinary leadership with regards to this matter, and I look forward to pursuing what is right and what is just on behalf of our fellow New Yorkers, fellow Americans and their families.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. I thank the gentlewoman for her really very eloquent and moving statement, and in closing, we must not forget the firefighters, police officers, EMTs and other first responders who bravely rushed down to the save the lives even as everyone else was running in the other direction, as my colleague so eloquently stated.

We must not forget the rescue, recovery and cleanup workers who stayed on for months at Ground Zero in service to our country.

And we must not forget the residents, area workers and school children who lived, worked and studied through deadly toxins and have now become sick.

Once again, I stand on the floor of Congress to pledge that I will not stop fighting until everyone exposed to the deadly toxins is monitored and everyone who is sick gets the treatment they deserve.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my colleagues have 5 days to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. YARMUTH). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

PATENT REFORM ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is a critical day for America. Tomorrow, the House will consider legislation that will dramatically diminish a constitutionally protected right that has served this Nation well. We are talking about fundamentally altering the laws governing the ownership of technology in our country. America's patent system is on the line.

In short, if H.R. 1908, the bill in question, passes, there will be a tremendous negative, long-term consequence not just for America's inventors but for our country as a whole.

It is American technology that has made all the difference in our country's security and our people's way of life.

Those patriots who laid the foundation for our country wrote into the Constitution a provision they firmly believed as a prerequisite to progress and freedom.

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution states in part that, quote, Congress shall have the power to promote the progress of science and useful arts by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries, end of quote.

Our Founding Fathers obviously held the right of owning one's ideas, creations and inventions as equal to the rights of speech, religion and assembly. In fact, in the body of the Constitution, the word "right" is only used in reference to patents and copyrights. The Bill of Rights was added later.

In short, we have had since our country's founding the strongest patent protection in the world, and that is why in the history of mankind there has never been a more innovative and creative people. It has been no accident that Americans have been the world's great inventors, scientists, and technologists. Black Americans, in particular, have excelled in the creation of new technologies. This was no accident. It was a result of the protections that we put into our law to secure for all people the right of ownership for their inventions and their creations.

Americans were the inventors of technology that produced more wealth, with less labor, and thus elevated the standard of living of all people which, in turn, opened the doors of opportunity for all people.

Let us understand that it was not raw muscle, nor was it the hard work of our people that built this country. There are people who work hard all over the world. They work hard and they use their muscles and they struggle; yet, they live in abject poverty. So it's not just the use of one's physical strength that will change the world and make it a better place. It was not our vast territory and our natural resources that gave us a standard of living of which we are so proud. No, it was not these things. It was our ingenuity, our intelligence and, yes, the legal system that was established to protect ingenuity and creativity that brought us the joys of freedom and the benefits of freedom.

We treated intellectual property rights, the creation of new technologies, as we treated property, personal and other political rights, and that is what America has been all about. Every person's rights were to be respected and protected; and as I have just demonstrated, the idea of the right to own one's creation was fundamental to this concept of the American Dream that was laid in the constitutional foundation of our country by our Founding Fathers.

Today, we face a great historic challenge, and this challenge comes exactly at the time when our country faces economic threats from abroad as never