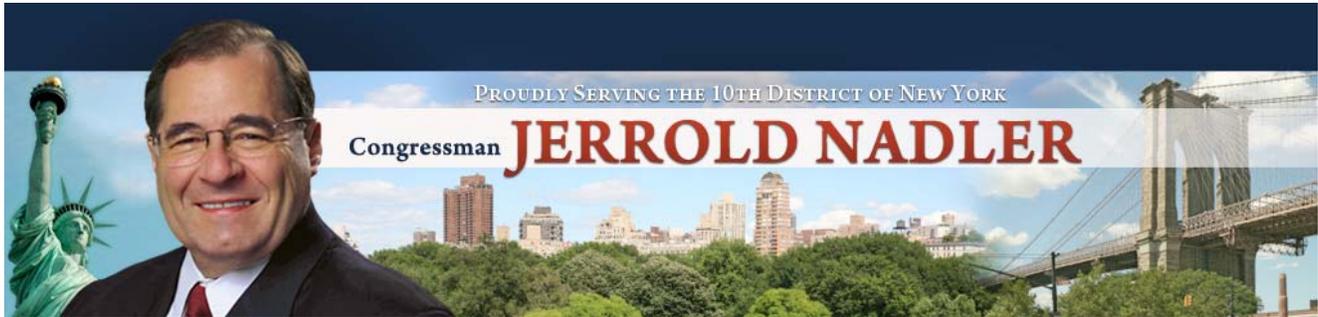


November 13, 2015

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Dear Friends,

A Five-Year, Partially-Funded Extension Is Not Enough! Congress Must End the Uncertainty and Make the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act Permanent.



Congressman Nadler, joined by 9/11 responders and survivors, as well as congressional colleagues from New York and New Jersey, at a press conference for permanent reauthorization of the Zadroga Act.

I recently wrote to you about the expiration of the *James Zadroga Act*, which provides health care and financial assistance to 9/11 survivors and responders. Instead of a permanent reauthorization, however, the House Majority proposed a temporary extension for only five years, with funding levels that are below what is needed for these men and women. This is unacceptable. We should end the uncertainty and not force the sick and injured heroes of 9/11 to beg for their healthcare again and again.

Fourteen years ago, we stood together and promised to never forget the attacks of September 11th, or those who

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inspired us with their bravery that day and in the weeks and months after the attack. That is why I worked for over a decade to pass legislation, the original *James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act*, along with Representatives Carolyn Maloney and Peter King, as I watched these heroes grow sicker and sicker, to ensure the government and the country lived up to our promise to never forget.

This year, we introduced a bill to fully fund and permanently renew this vital legislation, and we have broad and bipartisan support in Congress, with 244 cosponsors in the House and 62 in the Senate. I am hopeful more of my colleagues will join us in pushing for the permanent extension of these programs, and that the recent Republican proposals from the Judiciary and Energy and Commerce Committees are a signal of openness to finally bring *Zadroga's* permanent reauthorization to the House floor this year. Congress must act now and show our support for our 9/11 responders and survivors.

New Highway Transportation Bill to Create National Freight Rail Program

Congress is getting ready to vote on a bill that will provide billions of dollars for new roads, highways and bridges in order to finally begin to address the crumbling infrastructure of our country. The bill makes significant progress on several key transportation issues, including the creation of a national freight program – an issue I have long advocated for in order to improve our nation's freight rail. New York is the only major city in America that is not directly connected to the country's rail freight network, and the advantages for our economy, quality of life, and national security only increase the importance of correcting the decades of neglect. As the senior northeast member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I am very proud of the new guaranteed federal funding for critical regional and national freight projects available through this legislation, of which the cross harbor rail tunnel for NYC would be one of several projects eligible to directly benefit.

Yet there are serious concerns that remain over the critically low funding levels provided in the bill, including an \$86 billion backlog of maintenance and repair needs for public transit according to the Department of Transportation. A well-performing transportation network is vital to the economic success of America. It keeps jobs in the country, allows businesses to expand, and lowers prices on household goods for families. It allows businesses to manage their inventories and transport goods more cheaply and efficiently, as well as access a variety of suppliers and markets for their products, making it more cost effective for manufacturers to move production in and around the United States. If we don't

begin to make the necessary investments now, as other countries like China are doing, it will become more difficult for America to compete in the future.

Discussing Affordable Housing at The West Side Tenants Conference

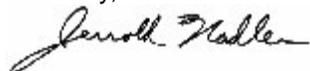
Last weekend, I addressed the annual West Side Tenants Conference, a gathering of nearly 200 residents, affordable housing advocates, and tenant leaders from throughout the district. As someone who has fought hard throughout my career to protect and increase federal support for affordable housing, I was honored to be able to speak directly with so many individuals who depend on having stable, quality, affordable housing in their neighborhoods. I spoke about the challenges we have faced in Washington and the real impacts of these policies on people's lives here in New York City, such as the serious reductions in numbers of Section 8 vouchers available and the forced down-sizing of certain residents' apartments without regard for family needs. I will continue to work to restore cuts and to protect tenants and affordable housing in Congress.

Fighting Continuing Discrimination After The SCOTUS Marriage Equality Decision

Last month I joined 83 of my House colleagues and 38 Senators to write to the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Department of Justice in order to ensure that the SSA's implementation of marriage equality, as provided in both *United States v. Windsor* and *Obergefell v. Hodges*, does not unfairly punish same-sex couples. For some time after the Supreme Court's *Windsor* decision, SSA continued to issue benefits to Supplemental Security Income recipients in same-sex marriages as though these individuals were single. For some recipients, SSA is still doing so. Because benefits for unmarried individuals are higher than those for married individuals, SSA's failure to update its policies resulted in overpayments. In many cases, SSA has now issued overpayment notices seeking to recapture those funds. Our letter urged the SSA to issue a blanket waiver for recovery of overpayment for all of these individuals.

SSA should not penalize people who are poor, elderly, or disabled because SSA continued the government's system of discrimination against legally married same-sex couples long after the Supreme Court struck it down as unconstitutional. I will continue to press the agency to remedy this hardship and am hopeful we will succeed.

Sincerely,



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