



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 8, 2014

CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

No. 433

**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT GROUND
ZERO IN SUPPORT OF REAUTHORIZING THE JAMES ZADROGA 9/11 HEALTH
AND COMPENSATION ACT**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you very much. Well, first of all, to Senator Gillibrand, your extraordinary focus and energy and commitment have been crucial to how much has been won already for the first responders. If you hadn't said that you were going to see this through no matter what was thrown at you, we wouldn't be standing here today. Let's thank Senator Gillibrand for all that she's done.

[Applause]

In the house, Carolyn Maloney, Jerry Nadler, Peter King – they've all stood up for our first responders, and it's hard in the house of representatives to get things done, but they found a way, and I have confidence they will find a way again. The logic that Senator Gillibrand laid out related to our history – what we owe to people who have served us.

You know, a lot of us here are children of folks who served in the military. When my father came home from World War II, there was no question that he was going to get the G.I. Bill. When my wife's father came home from World War II, there was no question that he was going to get the G.I. Bill. Why is there a question that brave men and women who served under the most adverse circumstances, after an attack on our country – why is there a question about them getting what they deserve? There should be no question. This should not be a debate. This should be simply a march to action, to help those in need.

[Applause]

We've all fought together before. I want to thank everyone in labor – Mario Cilento of the state AFL-CIO, and Vinny Alvarez of the City Central Labor Council, and Chris Sheldon of the communications workers. We've all fought together. We've fought side by side with our brothers and sisters from the uniformed services union. We had many a day where we came together to say that justice has to be done here. I stood with Pat Lynch of the PBA, I stood with James Lemonda, the new president of the UFOA, and so many others who called for basic justice for

people who had done so much. We're still fighting that fight. We have to see it through to conclusion. I want to thank – there's been so many people – some famous, some less famous, but they've all stood up for these first responders. We all know and we've all been inspired by John Feal, and the FealGood Foundation – thank you so much, John.

[Applause]

And Catherine McVay Hughes, of Community Board 1, thank you for all you've done.

We've had so many allies who get it. We need our voices to be heard in Washington. Yes, it is a moral imperative. It's something we have to set as an example that we will always stand by people who answer the call. We lost hundreds and hundreds of devoted public servants that terrible day. We lost thousands of civilians. And then we started losing more.

And we've all felt it very personally. In June of this year, I attended a ceremony for 12 fallen NYPD officers who served at Ground Zero and later lost their lives because of the illnesses they contracted here. We're still trying to save people. We're still memorializing people we lose each and every [inaudible]. This is still happening – and it means it deserves an urgent response. And something my colleague said – and please, I ask our friends in the news media to amplify this point – the people who came to serve did not just come from the five boroughs, they didn't just come from the metropolitan area – they came from all over the country. Almost every congressional district in this nation had representatives come here. People – first responders – came here!

[Applause]

So this is truly national. It was an attack on our nation. The response was national. The people who are suffering today are all around our nation. Their private insurance just isn't doing it for them. We have to do more.

I'll finish by saying, simply – it's so appropriate that we remember 9/11 in so many ways. It's so appropriate that we have the powerful memorial near this site that people go to and reflect upon those they lost – they reflect upon what we owe to their memory. Let's do more than just reflect upon those who are still alive, who we can help right now, whose suffering we can ease. Let's devote ourselves to them. Let's walk hand in hand with them. Let's get our congress to do the right thing, and support our heroes. Thank you.

[Applause]

###