



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

## Governor Hochul Signs Legislation to Support 9/11 Victims, First Responders, and Their Loved Ones

BRIAN KAVANAGH September 12, 2023

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Governor Hochul Signs Legislation to Support 9/11 Victims

Legislation (S. 2946-B/A. 75-B) Requires Employers to Inform Employees of the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund and the World Trade Center Health Program

Governor Kathy Hochul today signed five pieces of legislation in New York City to provide support to 9/11 victims, survivors and their loved ones. This support will help to remove barriers and delays from Victim Compensation Fund and workers' compensation claims. In

addition, two bridges and a highway will be designated to honor brave individuals who gave the ultimate sacrifice. The Governor signed these pieces of legislation in New York City while honoring and remembering those lost during on September 11th, 2001. In addition, Governor Hochul was joined by Vice President Kamala Harris, New York State Attorney General Letitia James, New York City Mayor Eric Adams and other federal, state and local elected representatives during a visit to the World Trade Memorial Museum earlier today.

“On this solemn day of remembrance, let us not only honor the lives lost on 9/11, but also extend our support to the survivors, their loved ones and our first responders,” **Governor Hochul said.** “New York remains committed to honoring the legacy of those lost and providing resources for victims and their loved ones.”

Legislation (S. 2946B/A. 75-B) aims to ensure that individuals who were in the Lower Manhattan and northern Brooklyn exposure zones between September 2001 and the end of May 2002 are made aware by employers of their rights to register for the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund and the World Trade Center Health Program, which provide monitoring and treatment for eligible individuals with WTC-related illnesses. The legislation would require businesses and institutions that had people return after the attack to notify them of their potential eligibility for the Victim Compensation Fund and World Trade Center Health Fund. The State's Economic Development agency and Department of Labor will coordinate a plan to provide adequate notice of the benefits available.

**State Senator Brian Kavanagh said,** “In addition to our heroic first responders, there are many workers, including retail employees, cleanup workers, office workers, building services staff, and others who were in the vicinity of the World Trade Center during and after the horrific 9/11 terrorist attacks and who may experience WTC-related illnesses. The 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund and the World Trade Center Health Program have been a lifeline for many people for two decades, but many others are not aware that they may be eligible for

these programs. This law will help remedy this by enlisting employers of those who worked in the area on or after 9/11 up until July 31, 2002 to notify each employee of these programs. I thank Assemblymember Nader Sayegh for championing this bill in the Assembly, all those who advocated for its passage, and Governor Hochul for signing it into law."

**Assemblymember Nader J. Sayegh said,** "In this pivotal moment where our nation stands at the crossroads of memory and responsibility, New York's 9/11 Notice Act shines as a beacon of recognition and justice. Governor Kathy Hochul's support activates the 'Go Find Me Movement' to locate and help forgotten victims of 9/11. I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Governor Kathy Hochul and all members of the New York State Legislature for recognizing the urgency of alerting those who returned to their daily lives in Lower Manhattan, that they too were exposed to the toxic aftermath of 9/11 and suffered for far too long in silence. With this legislation, we are ensuring that the forgotten victims, from downtown office workers to students, are not left behind, and they receive the support and care they rightfully deserve. Governor Hochul's commitment to the well-being of our community is a testament to her dedication to the people of New York."

Legislation (S. 6462/A. 6732) designates a portion of the state highway system as the "Port Authority Police Officer Pavlos D. Pallas Memorial Bridge" located in the neighborhood of East Elmhurst, Queens County. The Port Authority PBA, Paul's former union, seeks to see Paul eternally remembered in his hometown for his service.

**State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said,** "I thank Governor Hochul for signing this legislation on 9 /11 as a tribute to those who lost their lives as a result of the attack on our nation. Officer Pallas deserves to be honored for his selfless service and sacrifice. It will be known as 'the Port Authority Police Officer Pavlos D. Pallas Memorial Bridge.' Naming the bridge in his memory will serve as a constant reminder of Officer Pallas and all the brave men and women who sacrificed their lives to save others in the face of an indescribable act of terror. We are

all indebted to these heroes.”

**Assemblymember Jeffrion L. Aubry said,** “Pavlos (Paul) Pallas’ legacy will live on with the newly designated “Port Authority Police Officer Pavlos D. Pallas Memorial Bridge”. Paul passed away from cancer in 2011, at the age of 34. He developed his illness following his assignment to the search and recovery efforts at the World Trade Center site following the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks. It is my honor to have helped make this recognition a reality.”

Legislation (S. 5362-C/A. 5223-C) designates a portion of the state highway system as the "Zone Sergeant James G. Sweeney Memorial Bridge" located in the Town of East Fishkill. This legislation is a fitting commemoration of the service he provided to his community and his fellow State Troopers.

**State Senator Robert G. Rolison said,** “Zone Sergeant Sweeney's life was ordered and defined by service to his community and his state. As a former Town of Poughkeepsie police officer who knew Sergeant Sweeney, I am honored to carry this legislation designating a piece of our New York highway system in his memory, and I thank Governor Hochul for signing it into law. I will continue to work with my colleagues in a bipartisan way to address public safety and affirm those who have sacrificed to protect us.”

**Assemblymember Anil Beephan said,** “I express my deepest gratitude to my fellow legislators, Governor Hochul, and all those who supported this bill. We recognize the profound impact that Zone Sergeant Sweeney had on countless lives. The Zone Sergeant James G. Sweeney Memorial Bridge stands as a lasting testament to the legacy of a true hero, inspiring future generations of public servants to uphold the highest standards of service and dedication.”

Legislation (S. 2519/A. 3052) allows Audra Lakeman, the widow of Trooper Lawrence Lakeman, a State Police officer deployed on 9/11 at the World Trade Center site and who

subsequently died of pancreatic cancer, to receive an accidental death benefit. Trooper Lakeman was granted a disability retirement benefit in 2007, but because pancreatic cancer was not recognized by the Department of Health and Human Services as an eligible 9/11-connected disease, Ms. Lakeman had previously been denied the higher accidental death benefit.

**State Senator Patrick M. Gallivan said,** “Trooper Lakeman served our state and our nation in the weeks and months after 9-11 and ultimately lost his life because of his heroic work at Ground Zero. He is among the victims of the worst terrorist attack in our country's history and we honor his commitment and dedication. I was proud to sponsor this legislation and I hope it will provide some comfort for his grieving family.”

**Assemblymember Monica P. Wallace said,** “Trooper Lakeman was a true hero who responded without hesitation to help with recovery efforts in the wake of the World Trade Center attacks on 9/11. Like so many heroes that day, he developed cancer from exposure to the toxic fumes. Unfortunately, Trooper Lakeman passed before the cancer he developed was linked to his work on 9/11. This legislation fixes that by allowing his family to apply for the death benefits he should have received long ago. I thank Governor Hochul for signing this legislation and ensuring he and his family receive the recognition they deserve for his service and sacrifice.”

Legislation (S. 5971/A. 7410) designates a portion of the state highway system as the "Port Authority Police Officer Steven J. Tursellino Memorial Highway" which is located on State Route 111 between State Route 454 and State Route 347 in the Towns of Islip and Smithtown in Suffolk County. This renaming taking place in Officer Tursellino's hometown is a fitting honor and a way to recognize the supreme sacrifice he made on behalf of the residents of the Great State of New York.