



Governor Phil Murphy

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Newark, N.J.

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation to Protect First Responders, Including 9/11 Volunteers

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TRENTON – Today, Governor Phil Murphy signed A4882 and S716 into law, which will enhance protections for first responders, including those who volunteered for 9/11 rescue, recovery, and clean-up efforts at World Trade Center sites.

"Thousands of courageous volunteers put their lives on the line in order to save those affected by the devastation of 9/11," said Governor Murphy. "We will never forget their selfless acts of heroism, just as we will always be grateful for the first responders who put their lives on the line for us every day. Today we send a clear message to all of our heroes: We have your back. I am proud to sign legislation that will ensure the health benefits and compensation that these incredible men and women deserve."

A4882, also known as "the Bill Ricci World Trade Center Rescue, Recovery, and Cleanup Operations Act," is named after Lieutenant Bill Ricci, a professional firefighter in Clifton, Passaic County, who volunteered to serve at Ground Zero after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Lieutenant Ricci was ineligible for an accidental disability retirement under previously existing law. However, through this act, members and retirees who volunteered for 9/11 rescue, recovery, or cleanup operations, like Lieutenant Ricci, will be eligible to receive accidental disability retirement. This act will also create an exception to the normal five-year filing requirement for 9/11-related operations.

S716, also known as "the Thomas P. Canzanella First Century First Responders Protection Act," is named after Deputy Chief Thomas P. Canzanella, a former Hackensack firefighter and advocate who served at Ground Zero after 9/11. Deputy Chief Canzanella, who was an IAFF state representative, passed away from a heart attack at the age of 50. In 2016, Governor Christie absolute vetoed a previous version of this bill.

Under previously existing law, first responders and firefighters had the burden of proving causation for their illnesses, which often required a significant expense of time and resources. This new law reforms New Jersey's workers' compensation law to create a rebuttable presumption of coverage for public safety workers for certain illnesses. For firefighters, those with seven or more years of service who suffer an injury, illness or death caused by certain types of medical conditions would not be required to demonstrate causation or exposure before receiving medical benefits and financial compensation. Other first responders, including first-aid or rescue squad members, police, corrections officers, nurses, medical technicians, and other medical personnel, are also not required to demonstrate causation of illnesses, but are required to provide evidence of exposure. [Back to top](#)

"The Labor Department works hard to ensure that workers receive all the benefits they are entitled to under the law, and this is especially true for our first-responders," said New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. "I'm proud to see that New Jersey's brave men and women on

the front lines, who run toward danger to keep the rest of us safe, will now have access to benefits if they become sick or disabled as a result of their heroism on 9/11, and will be taken care of in any future emergency."

"I am glad that the lawmakers were able to come together on this so quickly to help us," said Lieutenant Bill Ricci, City of Clifton Firefighter. "It's great how there were changes made on the fly to help more people as they became aware of the need. Hopefully, only a few will require this legislation, but it's here now to help all that need it."

"My family is so honored and so grateful to stand here today. It's been a very long 12 years without him but to see that this work is going to help so many people is just so powerful," said Allison Canzanella, daughter of Thomas P. Canzanella. "And, I'm just so proud to be his daughter every single day. Thank you."

"Today, with the signing of the "Thomas P. Canzanella 21st Century First Responders Protection Act," Firefighters, first responders, public safety workers, and their families in New Jersey will benefit in the event of an injury, illness or death in the performance of their duties," said Dominick Marino, President of the Professional Firefighters Association of New Jersey. "On behalf of the PFANJ Executive Board, its members, and their families, I want to thank Assemblywomen Quijano and Senator Greenstein for sponsoring and working to get the "Thomas P. Canzanella 21st Century First Responders Protection Act" passed and thank Governor Murphy for signing it into law."

"The IAFF is proud to see New Jersey recognizing the dangers of occupational cancer our members encounter," said Harold Schaitberger, General President of the International Association of Fire Fighters. "The "Thomas P. Canzanella Twenty First Century First Responders Protection Act" will help care for fire fighters who are sick as a result of doing their duty of protecting their community."

"It is time that we the citizens of New Jersey protect our police and fire as they protect us. The signing of these 2 bills is a beginning of this endeavor," said Robert Fox, President of the New Jersey State Fraternal Order of Police. "I thank the Governor, the Assembly, and the Senate for their actions to get these bills signed into law."

"With the signing of these bills today, Governor Murphy and the Legislature guarantee the brave men and women who answered the call on 9/11 are not forgotten," said Pat Colligan, President of the New Jersey State Policemen's Benevolent Association. "Those officers who bravely went into harm's way and have dealt with the health consequences now have the reassurance they will be covered. I want to thank the Governor and Legislature for assuring our heroes that they are not abandoned."

"The NJFMBA thanks the Governor and Legislature for moving this important legislation and signing them in Jersey City," said Wayne Wolk, Executive Vice President of the New Jersey State Firefighters' Mutual Benevolent Association. "Seventeen years ago, our elected officials promised to never forget the sacrifices first responders made on September 11th and the weeks and months that followed. Today, our elected officials showed that here in New Jersey, they keep their promises."

"I want to thank everyone for their hard work in getting this bill passed, including the Governor, the Legislature, and most of all, the brave responders who answered the call on 9/11," said Dr. Iris Udasin, Medical Director of the World Trade Center Clinic, Rutgers' Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute.

Primary sponsors of A4882, also known as, "the Bill Ricci World Trade Center Rescue, Recovery, and Cleanup Operations Act," include Assemblymembers James Kennedy, Jamel Holley, and Andrew Zwicker, and Senators Nicholas Scutari and Joseph Lagana.

"When police and firefighters in New Jersey received word that two planes had struck the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, many of them didn't hesitate before responding to the scene, even though they were not specifically ordered to go," said Assemblyman James Kennedy. "Unfortunately, some suffered permanent or total disability. Due to the fact that they responded as volunteers, they have not been entitled to the same compensation as their counterparts who were considered to be 'on the job' that day. This law changes that."

All of the heroic men and women who responded to Ground Zero deserve our utmost respect and admiration, regardless of whether they were on the clock," said Assemblyman Jamel Holley. "They all saw the same terror, took the same risks, and worked towards the same goal. If their health has been affected in the time since, they all should be eligible for the same disability allowance."

"Our country is still feeling the effects of 9/11 today. The impact on those who were there – particularly our first responders – remains even more prevalent," said Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker. "We can go further to honor our first responders by ensuring they are recognized and compensated for their service on 9/11, voluntary or otherwise. They deserve nothing less."

"Many of these brave men and women are suffering from serious illnesses traced back to their efforts at Ground Zero," said Senator Nicholas Scutari. "This law will provide much needed financial support for these individuals whose health was drastically effected when they heroically put their country first on 9/11."

"In the aftermath of 9/11, first responders from our state displayed absolute heroism, facing fear and uncertainty head-on. Now, these brave individuals will finally be able to receive the increased benefits of accidental disability they deserve," said Senator Joseph Lagana. "This is an easy decision to make to help our resident heroes who are facing medical conditions related to the Ground Zero cleanup. Guaranteeing these benefits is the least we can do for these brave men and women."

Primary sponsors of S716, also known as, "the Thomas P. Canzanella First Century First Responders Protection Act," include Senators Linda Greenstein, Christopher Bateman, and Joseph Lagana, and Assemblymembers Anette Quijano, Daniel Benson, and Verlina Reynolds-Jackson.

"First-responders should not have to fight to receive treatment or compensation related to on-the-job exposure to toxins and pathogens," said Senator Linda Greenstein. "This law recognizes that symptoms of illnesses may not be immediate and ensures that no matter when symptoms occur, our emergency personnel are protected."

"First responders run towards danger with the sole goal of saving lives. We have already seen far too many pay a price for that heroic sacrifice. We need to ensure these heroes get the medical care they earned in the line of duty," said Senator Christopher Kip Bateman. "This law is the least we can do to thank the bravest among us for their unwavering commitment to keeping us safe."

"These workers are our first line of defense. Their jobs are not only stressful, they are dangerous," said Assemblywoman Annette Quijano. "This new law ensures that public safety workers are adequately covered if they suffer a debilitating illness or worse related to their duties at work."

"Public safety workers expose themselves to dangerous situations that could prove debilitating and even deadly," said Assemblyman Dan Benson. "Most importantly, the work can be a significant health hazard. Our workers deserve comparable coverage."

"These workers put their lives on the line for the safety of others," said Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson. "They should never have to question whether they will be compensated accordingly for the sacrifices that they make."

Governor Phil Murphy

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