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April 09, 2020

The Honorable Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senate
780 3rd Avenue, Suite 2601
New York, New York 10017

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate
757 3rd Avenue, Suite 1702
New York, New York 10017

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress
619 Lorimer Street
Brooklyn, New York 11211

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Senator Gillibrand, Senator Schumer, Congresswoman Maloney and Governor Cuomo:

These are unprecedented times that the nation is facing. Covid-19 has spread throughout New York City at an alarming rate and is further attacking the rest of our country. While the citizens of this great country are doing their best to combat the spread by social distancing and heeding the advice of the CDC and our country's leaders, the war is being fought by a different group of heroes- our doctors, nurses, EMTs, firefighters and police officers. It is they who are on the front lines each day- as you well know.

We sit at home and watch the news reports of issues with supplies getting to these responders and yet they continue to answer the call. They do so despite this virus being so insidious that it can not only infect the first responder, but also the first responder's family when they return home after tireless and seemingly endless shifts. They do so despite not having basic assurances from our Country that they and their families will be looked after, once the curve is flattened and life returns to normal for those who have been lucky enough to weather this storm.

We are concerned, however, that the medical and first responder heroes will not be able to simply walk away from the effects of this disease. We have already seen accounts of police officers, doctors and nurses passing away as a result of their exposure when trying to help our citizens. We are concerned that there will be more such casualties. We are concerned that there will be long term health effects of prolonged and consistent exposure to this virus- the extent of which is yet unknown.

Our firm has seen a similar situation borne in the years after 9/11. The effects of the toxins that first responders and those living and working in the neighborhood were not expected and thus, we were unprepared. Thanks in great part to your efforts, that issue was addressed, but it took nearly 20 years. It took countless trips to Washington to lobby and it took first responders on oxygen to travel and advocate for their rights and protections.

This Country needs to get ahead of the issue now. It needs to be proactive, instead of reactive. Protections must be put into place to protect those on our front lines so that each medical professional going into work knows that their efforts will not be forgotten. Our doctors and nurses are being applauded on the way to work, or in the evenings upon their return home. But, when the applause stops, will this Country remember the sacrifice and do the right thing to protect these brave individuals?

New York is the first epicenter of the infection to the United States. It is incumbent upon our great State to lead the country in both defeating the virus and protecting those who displayed strength and courage at a time when the entire world was gripped with fear.

To that end, we are calling for our New York representatives to step up to the national stage and propose the following measures:


- 1) An amendment to the Administrative Code for the City of New York to ensure that any condition or impairment of health caused by the Covid 19 virus, resulting in total or partial disability or death to a member of the uniformed force shall be presumptive evidence that it was incurred in the performance and discharge of duty; and

- 2) The establishment of a Covid19Fund modeled after the 9/11 Victim's Compensation Fund that will provide healthcare and compensation for those nurses, doctors, and first responders who suffer permanent consequences from exposure to this virus, and provide compensation to their families in the event Covid19 causes their death.


We have an obligation to protect those putting their lives and health at risk to fight this virus. It is not a political matter, but a moral imperative. This country, led by New York, should be forward thinking and put these protections in place before the unknown consequences of this virus unveil themselves. First responders, nurses, doctors and other medical professionals are not asking: "What about us?" They are not asking for anything but proper protective gear. It falls to those of us not on the front lines and our representatives to be there for them as they are there for us now.

Very truly yours,

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