NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
May 7-8, 2025
Indianapolis, Indiana

Resolution No. 9: Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits Eligibility for Veterans Affected by the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001
Origin: Resolution No. 6 (WI) 2024 National Convention
Submitted by: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was established to provide health care and benefits to military members related to their military service to the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, Many responders to and survivors of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 suffer from health conditions directly related to their exposure including but not limited to: respiratory disease, cancer, neurological disorders, mental health disorders and musculoskeletal disorders; and

WHEREAS, Research documents such as "The Development of the Inventory of 9/11 Agents" published by the World Trade Center Health Program (WTC HP) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have identified more than 350 chemical hazards that September 11, 2001 responders and survivors may have been exposed to, the health implications of these exposures can be severe and long lasting; and

WHEREAS, The CDC and the WTC HP, with these research documents, have established a list of presumptive illnesses related to September 11, 2001 responders and survivors' exposure at all three crash sites; and

WHEREAS, There are more than 1,200, September 11, 2001, responders and survivors from the Pentagon and Shanksville currently enrolled in the WTC HP and eligibility for enrollment for U.S. military responders and survivors was signed into law with the National Defense Authorization Act (Gillibrand Braun Amendment) in December of 2023; and

WHEREAS, Enrollment in the WTC HP by eligible U.S. active duty, reserve and National Guard military responders, as well as their caregivers and survivors, may support claims for service connection and benefits from the VA by establishing a nexus between their service and WTC-related health conditions; and

WHEREAS, It is essential that these veterans receive the same consideration and access to health care and benefits that all military members exposed to hazards during their military service are entitled; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion is committed to empowering veterans to lead high quality lives with respect and dignity; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 7-8, 2025, That The American Legion urges the secretaries of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense and the U.S. Congress to review all relevant research, records and documentation to confirm hazardous exposures and deem eligible for VA health care and benefits September 11, 2001 military responders who participated in rescue, recovery, security and other on-site support operations at the Pentagon, Shanksville (PA), and Ground Zero for related illness and injuries; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That The American Legion vigorously advocate for legislative and administrative actions to recognize illnesses related to the domestic military response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, as presumptive service-connected conditions, including formal recognition of such domestic response activities as toxic exposure risk activities; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion will collaborate with other veterans service organizations, providers and stakeholders to support this initiative and ensure our veterans have access to the health care and benefits they have earned through their service.