

Pols: 9/11 Workers Likely to Get Health Help

Newsday.com
March 31, 2009
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WASHINGTON -- Sponsors of a bill to compensate and cover health care costs of ailing 9/11 responders and recovery workers predicted Tuesday the House would pass the long-pending legislation this year.

New York Democratic Reps. Jerrold Nadler and Carolyn Maloney, of Manhattan, key sponsors of the measure, said the bill's ultimate fate lies in the Senate, where Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) has promised to introduce a companion bill.

"We have a really good chance of passing this," Nadler said.

Added Maloney, "We're going to get it done. We're going to pass this bill."

Rep. Peter King (R-Seaford) said some Republicans would join Democrats in voting for the bill. Nadler said if Congress passes a bill President Barack Obama has said he would sign it.

Nadler and Maloney made their predictions to two busloads of retired police, firefighters and other workers harmed by their work on the pile or nearby who had come down for a hearing on the bill. They are among the thousands of 9/11 responders whose ailments did not become apparent until after the 911 Victims Compensation Fund closed in 2003.

Nadler and Maloney have proposed a \$11-billion fund to both cover health costs and provide compensation. The bill also would limit the liability of the city and the contractors and subcontractors that took part in the recovery and clean up at Ground Zero.

Rep. Tim Bishop (D-Southampton) and Rep. Steve Israel (D-Huntington) also expressed optimism and support for the bill after the hearing and in the pep talk to the 9/11 workers.