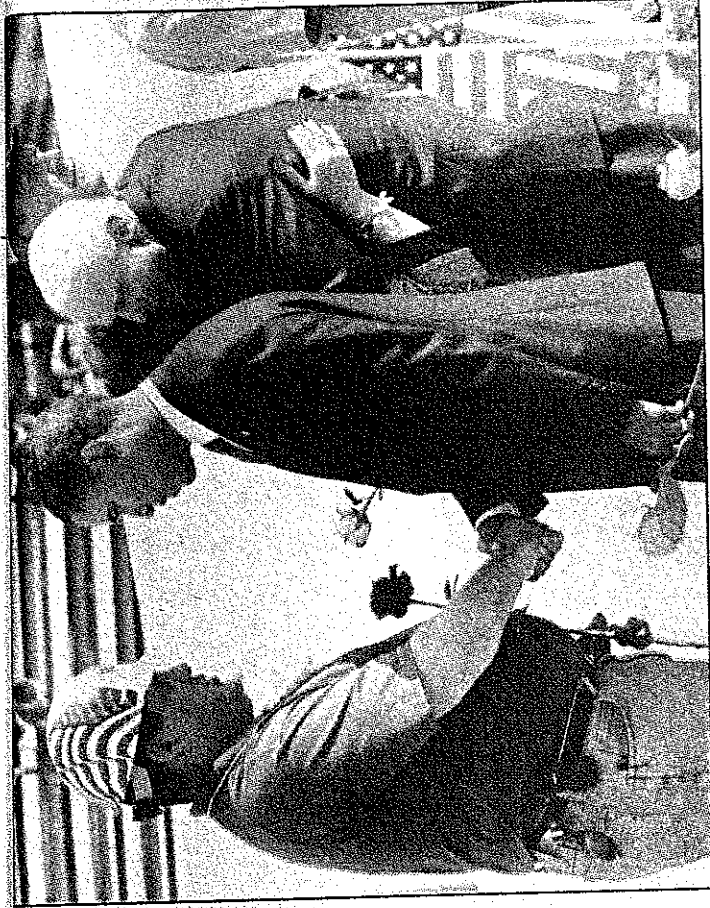


Pool photo by Chad Rachtman/New York Post

Barack Obama, Cindy McCain, and John McCain, greeted emergency responders last Thursday on the anniversary of the attacks, above. At right, Obama, shook hands with Brian Cichetti of EE Cruz Heavy Construction as McCain hugged a family member of a victim of the Sept. 11 attacks.



Pool photo by Peter Foley



Pool photo by Julie Jacobson/Associated Press

# Candidates silent on 9/11 health bill

Senators John McCain and Barack Obama made two New York City appearances on the seventh anniversary of 9/11, one at ground zero with Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the other at Columbia University, where they separately spoke about the importance of service. While both presidential candidates also discussed healthcare for soldiers returning from overseas, neither mentioned the plight of the 9/11 first responders and Lower Manhattan residents, students and office workers who are sick after

being exposed to the toxins and trauma of 9/11.

Neither presidential candidate has taken a public position on the 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, a bill before the U.S. House of Representatives that would extend long-term federal funding to monitor and treat those groups. A McCain campaign spokesperson said the senator looked forward to reviewing the bill when it came before the Senate. An Obama spokesperson declined to comment.

leadership on this."

Nancy Pelosi, speaker of the House of Representatives, is pushing the latest version of the 9/11 health bill, and she alluded to it during a speech on the seventh anniversary from the Capitol steps.

She said the country needs to honor those who responded to the World Trade Center "not only with our words, but by meeting the health needs of those whose problems linger to this day."

— Julie Shapiro