Bill to help sick 9/11 responders advances

WASHINGTON (AP) — A House panel has approved a $5.1 billion program to provide health care to the thousands of 9/11 first responders and other survivors sickened by the toxins emanating from the ruins of the World Trade Center.

The Energy and Commerce Committee voted 33-12 for the bill Tuesday.

New York City would contribute 10 percent of the cost of the program, which would run for 10 years. It would cover 25,000 responders and 25,000 survivors.

The legislation, which now moves to the full House, is named for James Zadroga, a New York City Police Department detective who died at age 34 in 2006 from respiratory disease contracted during rescue operations at ground zero.

The measure, sponsored by New York Democrat Carolyn Maloney, also reopens the federal victim compensation fund that closed at the end of 2003.

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