

Rothman Lobbies For Families of September 11 Victims

December 5, 2001

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Urges House Leadership to schedule vote on tax relief for surviving family members

Washington, DC - In an effort to relieve the mounting financial burden on the families of September 11 victims, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today joined more than a dozen relatives of New Jersey residents killed in the terrorist attacks as they met with Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert and Democratic Leader Dick Gephardt to call for the immediate passage of a measure that would provide tax relief to victims' survivors.

Rothman called on the House Leadership to immediately schedule a final vote on the Victims of Terrorism Tax Relief Act of 2001, which waives income taxes for this year and last year, provides a refund on any income taxes already paid during that period, and repeals a significant portion of the estate tax for surviving family members of September 11 victims. Additionally, the measure would refund two years worth of payroll taxes to all families of those killed in the terrorist attacks of September 11, make life insurance payments and disability benefits tax exempt, and eliminate income tax on charitable gifts and contributions to the victims' survivors.

"Congress must complete the passage of comprehensive tax relief for the families of terror victims without any further delay," Rothman said. "These families deserve financial assistance just like we gave to the airline industry, the rescuers, and all military personnel who are killed in the line of duty. Their loved ones lost their lives and took these terrible losses for the rest of us. We have an obligation to treat them fairly."

Two days following the terrorist attacks, the House approved a bipartisan Victims of Terrorism Tax Relief Act, which Rothman cosponsored, that included the income tax and estate tax provisions. After allowing time for new considerations, the Senate unanimously adopted the measure along with the additional provisions, including the payroll tax exemption, that U.S. Senator Robert Torricelli (D-NJ) authored.

"Instead of immediately allowing a vote on the more comprehensive Senate-approved version to provide relief and peace of mind to the families of those who were killed on September 11, the House Leadership continues to delay this measure for no good reason," Rothman said. "All of these families lost a major, if not their only, source of income when their loved ones were killed. They have bills and mortgages to pay just like the rest of us, but unfortunately they don't know where the money to pay for those things will come from."

Under the measure, all families of the nearly 3,500 victims killed in the attacks would receive tax relief, including the 55 families in Rothman's Ninth Congressional District.

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