

(Washington, D.C.) – Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) today commented on the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s announcement that it is formally closing its investigation of the 2001 anthrax letter attacks, commonly known as the “Amerithrax” investigation. The attacks evidently originated from a postal box in Holt’s Central New Jersey congressional district, killing five, and disrupting the lives and livelihoods of many of his constituents. The attacks greatly contributed to the national fear of terrorism and affected the response of our nation to these attacks. Holt has consistently raised questions about the federal investigation into the attacks.

“This has been a closed-minded, closed process from the beginning. Arbitrarily closing the case on a Friday afternoon should not mean the end of this investigation,” Holt said. “The evidence the FBI produced would not, I think, stand up in court. But because their prime suspect is dead and they’re not going to court, they seem satisfied with barely a circumstantial case. The National Academies of Science review of the FBI’s scientific methods in this case won’t be released until summer, but the FBI doesn’t seem to care.”

Holt added: “The people of Central New Jersey, who were terrorized by this attack, are not well served by this decision and still deserve answers about what happened. The families of the victims need to know whether the Bureau’s conclusions can be trusted. All Americans need to know whether their government has learned how prevent bioterrorism attacks, and how to properly investigate bioterrorism attacks should they occur.”

Last year, Holt introduced the Anthrax Attacks Investigation Act (H.R. 1248), legislation that would establish a Congressional commission to investigate the attacks and the federal government’s response to and investigation of the attacks. The bipartisan commission would make recommendations to the President and Congress on how the country can best prevent and respond to any future bioterrorism attack.