



# **FIRE FIGHTERS ISSUES BOOK**

**111TH CONGRESS • SECOND SESSION**



## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

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February, 2010

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the 300,000 men and women of the International Association of Fire Fighters, I am pleased to provide you with a copy of our 2010 Legislative Issues Book. Our nation's first responders are directly affected by many of the issues pending before the 111th Congress, and this briefing book is intended to provide you with a better understanding of the IAFF's positions on these vital issues.

On March 14 - 18, over 1000 professional fire fighters and emergency medical personnel from across the nation will come to Washington, DC to attend the IAFF's annual Legislative Conference and meet with their elected representatives. I hope you will have the opportunity to meet with your fire fighter-constituents to discuss the issues described on these pages, and that you will continue to seek the perspective of our nation's frontline domestic defenders on legislative matters in the months ahead.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of our views. The IAFF Department of Governmental Affairs stands ready to assist you and your staff throughout the year. Please do not hesitate to call on us. We look forward to a cooperative and productive legislative session.

Sincerely,

Harold A. Schaitberger  
General President

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# IAFF LEGISLATIVE ISSUES BOOK

## 111th Congress - Second Session

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### TABLE OF CONTENTS

ISSUE	PAGE
<b>Collective Bargaining</b>	
Fact Sheet	4
Key Points	5
<b>FIRE / SAFER Reauthorization</b>	
Fact Sheet	6
Key Points	7
<b>Federal Fire Fighter Retirement</b>	
Fact Sheet	8
Key Points	9
<b>Job Creation and Recovery</b>	
Fact Sheet	10
Key Points	11
<b>Urban Search and Rescue</b>	
Fact Sheet	12
Key Points	13
<b>World Trade Center Health</b>	
Fact Sheet	14
Key Points	15

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# IAFF LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEET

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

*The IAFF strongly supports the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act and encourages Members of Congress to cosponsor the bill.*

### BACKGROUND

Fire and police departments benefit immeasurably from productive partnerships between employers and employees. Studies have shown that communities promoting such cooperation enjoy more effective and efficient delivery of emergency services. Especially critical during our Nation's current economic challenges, cooperation enables employers and employees to work together to confront difficult budgetary constraints. Such cooperation, however, is undermined in states that do not provide public safety employees with the fundamental right to bargain with their employers.

Over the years, Congress has expanded the scope of collective bargaining laws to protect private sector employees, non-profit association employees, transportation workers, federal government employees and, most recently, congressional employees. One of the few groups of workers not covered by federal law is state and local government employees, including public safety officers.

While Congress has historically given states and localities wide latitude in managing their own employees, ensuring that public safety officers have basic collective bargaining rights is consistent with the increasing role of the public safety community in protecting our Nation's homeland security.

### CURRENT LEGISLATION

*U.S. House:* H.R. 413, the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act

Sponsors: Representative Dale Kildee (D-MI)  
Representative John Duncan (R-TN)

*U.S. Senate:* S. 1611, the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act

Sponsors: Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH)  
Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT)

*Summary:* H.R. 413 and S. 1611 would give public safety officers basic collective bargaining rights in states that currently don't provide them. The legislation gives states wide flexibility to write and administer their own laws, consistent with the following minimum standards:

- the right of public safety officers to bargain over wages, hours, and working conditions;
- a dispute resolution mechanism, such as fact finding, mediation, or arbitration; and
- if an agreement is reached, the right to enforce it in state court.

The bill expressly prohibits strikes and lockouts; does not infringe on right-to-work laws; and does not interfere with existing state laws and collective bargaining agreements.

### CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

On January 9, 2009, H.R. 413 was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives and referred to the Committee on Education and Labor.

On August 6, 2009, S. 1611 was introduced in the U.S. Senate and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

## KEY POINTS

### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

- The Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act enjoys broad support in Congress. In the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, the House version was adopted by a vote of 314 to 97, with a majority of both Republicans and Democrats supporting the bill. 69 Senators voted to bring the House bill to the floor for debate.
- Fire fighters, police officers, and emergency medical personnel risk their lives every day to protect the public. They deserve the same right to discuss workplace issues with their employer that the federal government already grants to most employees.
- Collective bargaining provides a forum where employers and employees can join together to tackle state and local budget shortfalls. During the recent recession, fire fighters across the country are not only offering up concessions to balance municipal budgets, but they're saving jobs and preventing layoffs in the process. Collective bargaining has helped save hundreds of fire fighter jobs in the past year.
- The federal government has a vital interest in improving local emergency response operations through adequate staffing, training, and equipment. Since 9/11, the federal government has established a variety of homeland security programs that rely on the effectiveness of local first response agencies, backed by billions of dollars in federal funding to improve local emergency response. It is clearly within the federal government's authority to also ensure that front-line responders are able to discuss with their employer how to best provide emergency services.
- The ability of first responders to talk about their jobs with their employers protects the public safety. Collective bargaining has produced measurable staffing, training, equipment, health and safety improvements throughout the nation's fire departments resulting in safer fire fighters and improved local emergency response capabilities. The fatality rate from fires—for both fire fighters and civilians—is significantly lower in states that permit fire fighters to discuss workplace issues with their employer.
- The bill gives maximum flexibility to states to craft their own laws giving fire fighters and police officers the ability to sit down and talk with their employers. The bill does not require public agencies to agree to anything, and does not empower a third party to compel a jurisdiction to do anything it has not explicitly agreed to.
- Just as important as what the bill requires, is what it does not require. The bill does *not* allow public safety officers to strike; does *not* require binding arbitration to resolve disputes; does *not* take away authority of states and local jurisdictions to have the final say over all public safety decisions; does *not* require any specific method to certify unions; does *not* infringe on the rights of volunteer fire fighters; and does *not* mandate compulsory unionism.
- The legislation is strongly supported by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), International Union of Police Associations (IUPA), the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO), and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

# IAFF LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEET

## FIRE / SAFER REAUTHORIZATION

*The IAFF supports legislation reauthorizing and improving the FIRE and SAFER grant programs to assure that federal assistance is used more effectively to protect the public safety, and to distribute grants more equitably among fire departments.*

### BACKGROUND

Since 2001, the FIRE Grant program (AFG) has aided thousands of fire departments by providing more than four billion dollars in federal aid for much-needed training, equipment, health and wellness programs and other fire service needs. Yet, despite the program's success, its effectiveness has been curtailed by the uneven distribution of grants among jurisdictions of varying sizes. Statutory restrictions inadvertently hamper larger departments that protect the majority of the population from receiving much-needed federal assistance. As a result, the majority of funds under AFG are being spent to protect a relatively small portion of the population.

AFG's sister program, the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant program, while crucial to increasing the number of fire fighters nationwide, also faces a number of significant restrictions under the law which threaten its mission. Specifically, the SAFER Act contains a number of administrative restrictions that complicate the ability of many jurisdictions to apply for and maintain a grant, and prevent many jurisdictions from seeking a grant at all. These difficulties have been exacerbated by the current economic crisis.

Both AFG and SAFER are due to be reauthorized in the current Congress. To address the current deficiencies, the IAFF has proposed a series of amendments to the programs as part of the reauthorization.

### CURRENT LEGISLATION

*U.S. House:* [H.R. 3791, the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act of 2009](#)  
Sponsor: Representative Harry Mitchell (D-AZ)

*Summary:* H.R. 3791 reauthorizes and makes improvements to the AFG and SAFER grant programs. Amendments to AFG include guaranteeing professional fire departments a minimum percentage of funding, increasing the amount of funding for which larger departments may apply and reducing the local match from 20% to 10%. The bill also simplifies SAFER by shortening the grant period from five to three years, implementing an across-the-board 20% local match and eliminating the current funding cap.

### CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

On July 8, 2009, the House Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation held a hearing on reauthorizing the AFG and SAFER grant programs.

On October 13, 2009, H.R. 3791 was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives and referred to the Committee on Science and Technology.

On October 14, 2009, the House Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation approved H.R. 3791 by voice vote.

On October 21, 2009, the Committee on Science and Technology approved H.R. 3791 by voice vote.

On November 18, 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives adopted H.R. 1499, the *Firefighter Fatality Reduction Act*, as an amendment to H.R. 3791 by a vote of 358-75.

On November 18, 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives approved H.R. 3791 by a vote of 395-31.

## KEY POINTS

### FIRE / SAFER REAUTHORIZATION

- The FIRE and SAFER grant programs have provided billions of dollars to strengthen the ability of local fire departments to protect the public safety and respond to all hazards. A study by the U.S. Fire Administration revealed that the FIRE Act has resulted in important enhancements in local fire protection, including increased and improved equipment and training. Additionally, the SAFER grant program has enabled local fire departments to hire over 3300 new fire fighters.
- The FIRE Grant program is also among the most efficient grant programs, having been scored as “effective” by an Office of Management and Budget analysis.
- Although only \$775 million was available to make awards in 2009, local communities applied for nearly four billion dollars in FIRE and SAFER grants to provide necessary training, purchase protective equipment, increase the number of fire fighters on the job and fulfill other fire service needs.
- Despite the success of the programs, improvements are needed to ensure that federal funding is spent in a way that maximizes the benefit to public safety and that grants are distributed more equitably among fire departments.
- Under the current FIRE grant allocation system, the overwhelming majority of funds are awarded to fire departments that protect areas with relatively small populations. Since 2002, nearly seventy percent of funds have been awarded to rural departments, while only ten percent of funds have been awarded to fire departments that protect metropolitan areas.
- The SAFER grant program also contains a number of administrative restrictions, including a high local match and the need for municipalities to budget five years into the future, that preclude many fire departments from taking advantage of the program.
- By restricting the ability of many communities to receive a grant under FIRE and SAFER, current law undermines the programs’ mission to enhance the safety of fire fighters and the public nationwide.
- Although legislation passed by Congress in 2009 includes a waiver of the local match and other restrictions for SAFER grants made in FY09 and FY10, these waivers are temporary, and do not fully address the restrictions that preclude many departments from taking full advantage of SAFER.
- The current economic crisis has led many communities to cut their fire department budgets, lay off fire fighters and reduce services, making funding through FIRE and SAFER more important than ever.
- Given the clear need for additional resources and the current uneven distribution of grants, reauthorizing and making significant improvements to FIRE and SAFER is necessary to fulfill the program’s initial intent and ensure that funds are used as effectively as possible.

# IAFF LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEET

## FEDERAL FIRE FIGHTER RETIREMENT

*The IAFF supports H.R. 3186 and urges Members of Congress to cosponsor the bill.*

### BACKGROUND

The federal government's retirement system uses a complicated formula to calculate pension benefits for federal fire fighters who protect military installations, veterans' hospitals, and other critical federal properties. The complexity stems in large part from the unusual work week of federal fire fighters. Fire fighters employed by the Department of Defense normally work 72 hours per week, with 19 hours of mandatory, scheduled overtime, including nights, weekends and holidays.

In 1998, Congress reformed the pay system of federal fire fighters to ensure that they receive a fair hourly rate of pay. Despite improvements in the hourly wage rate, the reforms fell short of adequately incorporating a fire fighter's entire pay, including compensation for mandatory overtime, into a fire fighter's retirement benefit. Fire fighters are the only federal employees to work mandatory, scheduled overtime, and are the only federal workers whose pension is based on only part of their normal weekly pay.

To address this inequity, legislation has been developed to ensure that federal fire fighters are treated like other federal workers whose pension benefits are based on their full weekly salary.

### CURRENT LEGISLATION

*U.S. House:* H.R. 3186, the Federal Firefighter Pay Equality Act  
Sponsor: Representative Gerry Connolly (D-VA)

*Summary:* H.R. 3186 would create a new formula for calculating federal fire fighters' retirement pay by fully crediting the pay a fire fighter earns during a regular tour of duty.

### CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

On July 13, 2009, H.R. 3186 was introduced and referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

## KEY POINTS

### FEDERAL FIRE FIGHTER RETIREMENT

- The federal government employs more than 10,000 fire fighters who protect military installations, nuclear facilities, VA hospitals, and other federal facilities.
- Federal fire fighters protecting installations vital to the federal government and to our national security deserve fair compensation and retirement benefits. Despite some progress in the 1990s, federal fire fighters have been unfairly shortchanged in their retirement benefits because of a flawed calculation method used to determine their pension.
- H.R. 3186 would ensure that a federal fire fighter's retirement pay fully credits the pay a fire fighter earns during a regular tour of duty.
- Federal fire fighters generally work a 72-hour week and 144 hours during a two-week pay period. Over the course of the pay period, federal fire fighters work 106 regular hours and 38 mandatory overtime hours.
- Currently, a federal fire fighter receives retirement credit for only part of the pay they earn during their 144-hour regular tour of duty.
- Consider a federal fire fighter who earns an annual base pay of \$42,000, or \$15.24 per hour. In a two-week pay period, the fire fighter is paid \$15.24/hour for 106 regular hours and \$22.86/hour for the remaining 38 mandatory overtime hours. The fire fighter's total salary for the two-week pay period is \$2,484, but his or her retirement benefit is based on a salary of only \$2,194.
- Under H.R. 3186, a fire fighter's retirement would account for full pay earned during a regular tour of duty. Specifically, the bill would fully credit the pay earned during the 38 mandatory, scheduled hours worked in each pay period beyond the 106 regular hours.
- Recruiting and retaining an experienced, skilled federal fire fighter workforce is critical to protecting our Nation's military installations and other federal facilities. H.R. 3186 would ensure that fire fighter retirement pay reflects the pay earned during a fire fighter's regular duty hours and bridge some of the gap between federal and municipal compensation packages offered to fire fighters.

# IAFF LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEET

## JOB CREATION AND RECOVERY

*The IAFF supports efforts in Congress to stabilize the economy by investing in good local jobs. Specifically, the IAFF supports stabilizing and growing public service jobs by providing additional funding for state and local personnel needs as well as the SAFER and AFG grant programs.*

### BACKGROUND

Municipalities nationwide have experienced the brunt of the economic crisis. Decreasing city revenues and the resulting budgetary shortfalls have caused significant cutbacks to the fire service. To address these cuts, communities nationwide are reducing fire department staffing through layoffs, attrition, or other reductions in force. A recent IAFF survey of locals revealed that approximately 6000 fire fighter layoffs have been implemented or proposed since September 2008. An additional 6000 positions have been lost through attrition.

In addition to the impact on employment, such actions have resulted in longer response times and hinder fire departments' ability to protect the public safety.

Congress is currently working to strengthen the economy by passing a comprehensive jobs bill. To address current personnel cuts in the fire service, the IAFF has proposed that any such bill include significant assistance for public safety, including funding for state and local personnel needs, as well as additional funding for the SAFER and AFG grant programs. Such funding will have an immediate impact on jobs, strengthen local economies and improve public safety.

### CURRENT LEGISLATION

*U.S. House:* H.R. 2847, the Jobs for Main Street Act of 2010  
Sponsor: Representative David Obey (D-WI)

*Summary:* The Jobs for Main Street Act funds new critical infrastructure, public service jobs and other investments to stabilize the economy. Among its provisions, the legislation includes \$500 million for SAFER to be used for job retention in addition to creating new jobs and reversing layoffs.

### CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

On December 16, 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to pass H.R. 2847 by a vote of 217 – 212.

## KEY POINTS

### JOB CREATION AND RECOVERY

- Working families and governments nationwide continue struggling to cope with the weak economy. According to the Bureau of Labor statistics, unemployment remains high with the unemployment rate at ten percent and over 15 million individuals looking for work.
- Although the economic stimulus bill passed in 2009 allowed states to spend a portion of their State Fiscal Stabilization funds on public safety, the majority of states chose to spend such funds on other priorities, leaving many public safety departments with continuing significant budgetary shortfalls.
- Communities nationwide are reducing fire department staffing through layoffs, attrition, or other reductions in force. A recent IAFF survey of locals revealed that approximately 6000 fire fighter layoffs have been implemented or proposed since September 2008. An additional 6000 positions have been lost through attrition. Downsizing among fire departments results in longer response times and an increased threat to public safety and local preparedness, placing communities and their citizens at significant risk.
- According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, forty-two states have already cut public employee budgets, and thirty-five states have FY10 mid-year budget gaps.
- The 2011 fiscal year begins on July 1, 2010 in forty-six states, requiring such states to prepare their FY11 budgets now. Without immediate assistance from the federal government in the form of direct aid and grants, states will be forced to make additional budget cuts, including sizable cuts to public safety.
- Providing direct aid for states and localities to fund public sector jobs will help such states and localities avoid devastating public safety cuts, and is one of the most effective way to create and save public safety jobs.
- As the only Homeland Security grant program to specifically fund personnel, the SAFER grant program is a proven effective and efficient way to sustain and increase the number of good-paying fire fighter positions nationwide.
- Fire manufacturing and service companies employ nearly 100,000 individuals in the United States. By significantly increasing the number and quantity of equipment and apparatus purchased by the U.S. fire service, providing additional funding for AFG would help grow and maintain jobs at U.S. manufacturers and distributors.

## **IAFF LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEET**

# **FUNDING FOR THE URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSE SYSTEM**

*The IAFF supports increased funding for the Urban Search and Rescue Response System and urges Members of Congress to provide \$50 million for the program in Fiscal Year 2011.*

### **BACKGROUND**

The National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Response System was originally established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 1989 to provide adequate search and rescue capacity in the event of an earthquake. Since then, the US&R System has evolved into an invaluable Federal, State and local resource capable of responding to both natural and manmade disasters, including earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, hazardous materials spills, acts of terrorism and catastrophic structure collapses. Most recently, several teams were deployed in response to the Haiti earthquake.

Today, the US&R System comprises 28 national task forces consisting of highly trained, equipped and exercised emergency response personnel, including many IAFF members.

The average cost to maintain a national US&R team is \$1.7 million. Annual appropriations through the Department of Homeland Security provide funding for training, exercises, communications and personal protective equipment, and medical monitoring for responder safety and health. Unfortunately, Congress has never provided adequate funding for the program, leaving the local governments that sponsor the 28 task forces responsible for filling the gap. Although Congress provided \$32.5 million for US&R in Fiscal Year 2010, this amount only covers approximately 70% of the necessary costs.

### **CURRENT LEGISLATION**

Funding for US&R will be addressed as part of the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2011.

### **CONGRESSIONAL ACTION**

On February 1, 2010, the Administration released its budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2011. The proposal includes \$28 million for US&R.

The House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Homeland Security will consider the Fiscal Year 2011 appropriations bills in the spring of 2010.

## KEY POINTS

# FUNDING FOR THE URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSE SYSTEM

- The National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Response System provides a significant national resource for search and rescue assistance in the wake of a major disaster or structural collapse.
- A typical US&R task force will conduct physical search and rescue operations, provide emergency medical care to trapped victims, assess and control hazards such as ruptured gas and electric lines, and evaluate and stabilize damaged structures.
- Due to the critical, life-saving nature of their mission, US&R task forces must be prepared to deploy within six hours of notification, and must be self-sufficient for the first seventy-two hours.
- US&R teams have been deployed in response to the Haiti earthquake, Hurricane Katrina, the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the Oklahoma City bombing, the Turkey earthquakes, the grain elevator explosion in Wichita, Kansas, and many other foreign and domestic disasters.
- Each of the twenty-eight US&R task forces consists of two thirty-one person teams, including fire fighters, engineers, medical professionals, hazardous materials specialists and others with special expertise. To ensure a full team can deploy to an emergency, a typical task force has more than 130 members.
- In addition to personnel, each task force includes four canines and a comprehensive equipment cache to support its operations. A typical US&R cache, includes tools, heavy rescue equipment, medical supplies, hazardous materials support equipment, canine support equipment, and communications equipment.
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency estimates the annual and recurring cost for each task force to be approximately \$1.7 million. In addition to program management costs, this estimate includes expenses for training, exercises, medical monitoring of personnel, and equipment maintenance and storage.
- Current federal funding for the nation's US&R teams only provides a fraction of the funds necessary to maintain each task force, leaving local government sponsors to pick up the rest of the cost, averaging approximately one million dollars per task force annually.
- Tight local budgets due to the recent recession have left many local government sponsors unable to subsidize crucial US&R functions such as training, significantly straining task forces' readiness and capabilities.
- Subsidizing US&R task forces at the local level also has a negative impact on community preparedness by diverting funds from local emergency services budgets.
- The recent earthquake in Haiti and the subsequent response underscore the importance of the national search and rescue capability. Increasing federal funding for the Urban Search and Rescue Response System will help ensure that highly skilled teams are available to respond to major emergencies without jeopardizing local emergency services.

# IAFF LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEET

## 9/11 HEALTH MONITORING AND TREATMENT

*The IAFF supports strengthening current health and monitoring programs for emergency responders to the World Trade Center, as well as reopening the Victim Compensation Fund.*

### BACKGROUND

The 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center created a toxic and hazardous environment for rescue and recovery workers and other workers and residents in lower Manhattan. An estimated 40,000 workers were exposed during rescue and recovery operations. Medical screening and monitoring of fire fighters and other rescue workers has found significant adverse health effects among the World Trade Center responders.

In September 2006, the Mount Sinai Medical Center published a report finding that almost 70% of World Trade Center responders developed new or worsened respiratory symptoms as a direct result of their work at Ground Zero. Similarly, the New York City Fire Department found that within the first week following 9/11, 99% of exposed New York City fire fighters reported at least one new respiratory symptom while working at Ground Zero. More than eight years after the attacks, persistent health problems including respiratory, gastrointestinal and mental health conditions continue to be documented among rescue and recovery workers.

Given the serious health problems experienced by World Trade Center responders, continued funding for existing monitoring and treatment programs must be assured. The programs are currently funded on a discretionary basis through the annual federal budget process, but given the long-term nature of the 9/11 illnesses, a long-term and stable funding mechanism must be established. Sustained and dependable assistance from the federal government will be required to assure continued monitoring and treatment services for the World Trade Center responders without burdening workers or their health and disability plans.

### CURRENT LEGISLATION

*U.S. House:* H.R. 847, the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act of 2009

Sponsors: Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY)  
Representative Peter King (R-NY)

*U.S. Senate:* S. 1334, the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act of 2009

Sponsors: Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)  
Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY)

*Summary:* H.R. 847 and S. 1334 would create a new program to administer a comprehensive medical monitoring and treatment program for World Trade Center responders, residents, students and others who were near the World Trade Center on 9/11. The bill would also reopen the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund to compensate 9/11 victims for economic damages and losses.

### CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

On February 4, 2009, H.R. 847 was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives and referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, as well as the Committee on the Judiciary.

On April 22, 2009, the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health held a hearing on H.R. 847.

On June 24, 2009 S. 1334 was introduced in the U.S. Senate and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

## KEY POINTS

### 9/11 HEALTH MONITORING AND TREATMENT

- Those who responded to the World Trade Center on 9/11 and in the following months selflessly put their lives and health on the line to help America recover from a national disaster. We have a moral obligation as a nation to provide them the care they need and deserve.
- World Trade Center responders were exposed to a toxic mix of dust and chemicals, including carcinogens such as benzene, asbestos, and dioxins, as well as extreme psychological trauma. Elevated air contamination levels persisted for many months due to rubble removal operations and fires.
- Medical screening has found significant physical health impacts, including respiratory and gastrointestinal symptoms, among World Trade Center responders. The Fire Department of New York found that 99% of exposed New York City Fire Fighters experienced at least one new respiratory symptom while working at Ground Zero, while the Mount Sinai Medical Center found that nearly 70% of responders developed new or worsened respiratory symptoms as a direct result of their work at Ground Zero.
- Screening has also found a significant number of responders suffering from mental health symptoms, including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). 19% of adults enrolled in the World Trade Center Health Registry showed symptoms of probable PTSD in 2006-2007.
- Continuing medical monitoring is essential for all World Trade Center responders as the long-term consequences of the sustained, unprecedented exposure they experienced are unknown. Regular monitoring will help ensure that latent diseases, such as cancer, are detected and treated early.
- Although the World Trade Center monitoring and treatment programs are currently funded through the annual appropriations process, the long-term nature of 9/11 illnesses requires a long-term and stable funding mechanism.
- Since 9/11, the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) has provided monitoring and treatment to over 15,000 active and retired members. Because of the inordinate impact the World Trade Center response had on the city's fire department, without sustained federal funds, the costs of such services would bankrupt the FDNY health plan.
- Although the Victim Compensation Fund closed to applicants on December 22, 2003, many responders' diseases did not develop until after this date. Responders should not be denied compensation just because they developed their illness after the original deadline.





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