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## FEDERAL FIREFIGHTERS

AFGE represents federal firefighters at Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Interior, and other agencies across the country. Too many firefighters are living with and dying from cancer in the United States every year. Firefighters are frequently exposed to smoke, toxic chemicals, and debris which can cause cancer. These civil servants and American heroes deserve the highest quality data and best public health solutions to help prevent and treat work-related illnesses. Federal firefighters put their lives on the line every day to protect and serve the American people. Most federal firefighters are located at military facilities. These federal firefighters have specialized training to respond to emergencies involving aircraft, ships, artillery, and ammunition. Federal firefighters at the Department of Veterans Affairs serve civilians and veterans including chronically ill and bedridden patients. Federal firefighters provide emergency medical services, crash rescue services, hazardous material containment, and fight fires.

The November 2025 government funding package included restoration of pay for federal firefighters who worked without a paycheck during the lapse in appropriations.

AFGE supports H.R. 5619, the Federal Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act introduced by Representatives Janelle Bynum (OR) and Joe Neguse (CO). This legislation provides continuing FY2026 appropriations to ensure federal firefighters *continue to receive pay and allowances during future government shutdowns* and prohibits reductions-in-force (RIF) for federal firefighters during such funding lapses.

AFGE supports S. 2473, the Federal Fire Fighters Families First Act introduced by Senators Ruben Gallego (D-AZ) and Bernie Moreno (R-OH). This legislation would include mandatory overtime into the fire fighter pension calculation. Specifically, it would modify certain pay calculations that are used to determine retirement and annuity benefits for federal firefighters. Specifically, the bill adjusts the method of determining the average pay of a federal firefighter by adding one-half of a firefighter's basic hourly rate multiplied by the number of overtime hours included as part of such firefighter's regular tour of duty. It also requires the Office of Personnel Management to issue regulations that cap the number of hours in a regular workweek, which may not exceed 60 hours per week.

AFGE supports the Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act (H.R. 1943/S. 135) introduced by Representatives Joe Neguse and Janelle Bynum and Senators Alex Padilla (D-CA) and Steve Daines (R-MT). This bill would permanently increase federal wildland firefighter pay, establish a new pay scale for wildland firefighters, establish additional pay supplements for wildland firefighters, and require consistency in agencies' policies related to work-life balance. This legislation has strong bipartisan support in the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate.

AFGE supports H.R. 2921/S. 2745, the Federal Firefighter Cancer Detection and Prevention Act introduced by Representatives Don Bacon (R-NE) and Donald Norcross (D-NJ) and Senators Elissa Slotkin (D-MI) and Susan Collins (R-ME). This legislation would provide no-cost cancer screenings to federal firefighters employed by the Department of Defense.

AFGE also supported the passage of the Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act, which strengthens protections for federal workers and their families across the public safety workforce. Given the significant amount of overtime that federal firefighters work, nearly all federal firefighters represented by AFGE should qualify to take advantage of the new tax deduction for qualified overtime compensation created by Public Law 119-21, commonly known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Section 70202(a) of Public Law 119-21 created new section 225 to the Internal Revenue Code that provides an income tax deduction for “qualified overtime compensation” for 2025 through 2028. AFGE suggests that federal firefighters look through Internal Revenue Service Notice 2025-69 (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/n-25-69.pdf>) which provides guidance and examples for claiming the new tax deduction for qualified overtime pay and to speak with your tax professional to make sure you qualify for the deduction.