



LEO & FIRST RESPONDER LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS TALKING POINTS

Main points

- The 117th Congress has introduced several bills that would improve the pay, benefits, and working conditions of federal law enforcement officers and other first responders.
- AFGE represents tens of thousands of federal law enforcement officers, firefighters, Border Patrol agents, and other first responders. We strongly support these legislative proposals and look forward to working with Congress to ensure their passage.

Bill highlights

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS EQUITY ACT

What it would do: This bill would expand the definition of law enforcement officer under Title 5 of the U.S. Code to include all federal employees who are authorized to carry a firearm and whose duties involve the investigation or apprehension of suspected or convicted individuals.

Why we support it: Existing law does not treat all federal law enforcement personnel equally when it comes to determining their pay rates and retirement benefits, resulting in second-class status for these officers and contributing to high turnover and low employee morale. This bill would close the loophole and ensure equal treatment for officers AFGE represents at the Federal Protective Service, Defense and Veterans Affairs departments, the U.S. Mint, and the Smithsonian Zoo.

Bill status: The bill was introduced in the House Feb. 11 by Rep. Bill Pascrell Jr. and three original cosponsors ([HR 962](#)) and in the Senate May 27 by Sen. Cory Booker and one original cosponsor ([S 1888](#)).

FEDERAL FIREFIGHTER PAY EQUITY ACT

What it would do: This bill would ensure that all hours worked by federal firefighters are counted toward retirement, including mandatory overtime.

Why we support it: Unlike their counterparts in state and local government, federal firefighters do not receive credit for the additional income earned from mandatory overtime when calculating their retirement benefits. This bill would correct that



injustice and allow for a more accurate and equitable retirement calculation for our nation's federal firefighters.

Bill status: The bill was introduced in the House Jan. 21 by Rep. Gerry Connolly and one original cosponsor ([HR 393](#)).

FIRST RESPONDER FAIR RETIRE ACT

What it would do: Ensure that federal firefighters, law enforcement officials, Border Patrol officers, and other federal first responders qualify for full retirement benefits if they are injured on the job.

Why we support it: First responders in 6c positions have an accelerated retirement system, allowing them to retire at age 50 with 20 years of service, and therefore pay a greater percentage of their salary toward their retirement. But currently they lose their early retirement benefits if they are injured on the job and return to federal service in another position. This bill would allow first responders to maintain these benefits if they have to switch to a different federal job due to an on-the-job injury.

Bill status: The bill was introduced in the House Jan. 28 by Rep. Gerry Connolly and two original cosponsors ([HR 521](#)) and in the Senate Jan. 28 by Sen. Jon Tester and two original cosponsors ([S 129](#)).

PROTECTING FIREFIGHTERS FROM ADVERSE SUBSTANCES (PFAS) ACT

What it would do: Direct the Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop guidance for firefighters and other emergency response personnel on best practices to protect them from exposure to PFAS and to limit and prevent the release of PFAS into the environment

Why we support it: 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 that 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.

Bill status: The bill was introduced the Senate Feb. 4 by Sen. Gary Peters and six original cosponsors ([S 231](#)).



WILDLAND FIREFIGHTER RECOGNITION ACT

What it would do: Require the Office of Personnel Management to create a classification that more accurately reflects the vital role of wildland firefighters

Why we support it: Firefighters who protect our national forests and property from wildfire destruction currently have vague titles that do not reflect the scope of the job, including wildland technicians and forestry technicians. This bill would direct OPM to develop a separate and distinct occupational series for wildland firefighters to reflect their job duties more accurately.

Bill status: The bill was introduced in the House Feb. 8 by Rep. Doug LaMalfa and one original cosponsor ([HR 938](#)).

FEDERAL FIREFIGHTER FAIRNESS ACT

What it would do: Ensure that federal firefighters are covered by workers' compensation if they are harmed in the line of duty or fall ill as a result of their service.

Why we support it: Federal firefighters work hard every day to protect lives and property at military bases, VA hospitals, and other federal installations across the country. This legislation would ensure that federal firefighters are covered by workers' compensation if they are harmed in the line of duty or fall ill as a result of their service.

Bill status: The bill was introduced in the House April 14 by Rep. Salud Carbajal and three original cosponsors ([HR 2499](#)) and in the Senate April 14 by Sen. Tom Carper and four original cosponsors ([S 1116](#)).

FEDERAL FIREFIGHTER FLEXIBILITY AND FAIRNESS ACT

What it would do: Allow federal firefighters to trade shifts across multiple pay periods without decreasing their regular pay or triggering overtime pay requirements.

Why we support it: Allowing firefighters to trade shifts ensures that firehouses maintain staffing requirements and can keep communities safe – while enabling firefighters to meet personal obligations without having to use annual leave.

Bill status: The bill was introduced in the House March 18 by Rep. John Sarbanes ([HR 2059](#)) and in the Senate March 18 by Sen. Chris Van Hollen and three original cosponsors ([S 838](#)).