



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

## NEWS from Fire Fighters

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### Public Safety Workers Seek Voice to Improve Emergency Preparedness, Safety on the Job

**Bill With Significant Bipartisan Support Gets 69-29 Vote to Proceed  
Is Now Pending Before the Senate**

***Would Extend Workplace Rights to Fire Fighters, Police Officers***

**WASHINGTON** – *Harold A. Schaitberger, president of the International Association of Fire Fighters, issued the following statement in support of S. 2123, Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act, which the United States Senate voted overwhelmingly today 69-29 to take up as pending business:*

“It was reinforced to our entire country following the September 11 terrorist attacks and after the devastation of Katrina that our nation’s emergency responders put their lives on the line for the safety of others under the most dangerous and challenging of circumstances. Yet, many of these workers don’t have the right to discuss with their employer how best to provide emergency services in their jurisdiction.

“Today the Senate voted overwhelmingly to begin debate on a bipartisan bill that would give public safety workers – fire fighters, emergency medical workers, police officers, correctional officers – a voice in making sure our communities are protected from disasters, and that those who risk their lives in the service of the citizens are kept safe and rewarded properly for their sacrifice.

“This bipartisan collective bargaining bill – sponsored by Judd Gregg (R-NH) and Edward Kennedy (D-MA) – has 11 Republican co-sponsors in the Senate and passed overwhelmingly in the House.

“S. 2123 ensures that cities and states have maximum flexibility to craft their own laws giving fire fighters, police and correctional officers the ability to sit down and talk with their employees. The bill does not allow public safety officers to strike, nor does it require binding arbitration to resolve disputes. Simply put, S. 2123 makes sure those on the frontlines, who make snap decisions in saving lives everyday, have a voice in protecting themselves and their communities.

“It is long overdue that our nation affords to public safety workers the same rights and protections that most American workers enjoy, and we urge the Senate to pass S. 2123 and President Bush to sign it into law.”

The House version, H.R. 980, passed by a vote of 314-97, with a majority of both Republicans and Democrats supporting the bill. Today, the Senate voted overwhelmingly 69-29 to take up the bill, which is now under active consideration and debate.

*The IAFF is the world’s largest fire fighters union, representing 288,000 fire fighters and emergency medical personnel in the United States and Canada.*

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