



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

## NEWS from Fire Fighters

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### **Proposed Budget Cuts in House will Jeopardize Public Safety and Put Fire Fighters at Risk**

*Washington, DC* – The International Association of Fire Fighters today urged members of Congress to reject a proposal to slash funding for two crucial federal programs that fund public safety.

The House Appropriations Committee yesterday proposed cutting the FIRE Act and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response [SAFER] grant program by a combined \$510 million, an unprecedented cut that would place the public and fire fighters in danger by reducing the resources of the nation's fire departments.

“We understand the need to save money, but these misguided cuts will cost lives. This budget proposal isn't a wise investment, it's a recipe for disaster,” IAFF General President Harold Schaitberger said.

The budget proposal includes eliminating the \$420 million SAFER program. SAFER grants in fiscal 2009 allowed fire departments throughout the nation to rehire thousands of fire fighters who were laid off when municipalities felt the brunt of the recession and had to cut programs and lay off workers to balance budgets.

SAFER has been an extraordinary safety net for those communities. It has also been a successful jobs program, allowing communities to preserve public safety by ensuring that fire departments have an adequate number of fire fighters.

“Eliminating SAFER isn't just bad for the fire fighters who will lose their jobs if the program is eliminated, it's bad for the towns and cities that rely on the grants for the fire fighters they wouldn't have otherwise because the recession forced them to cut back. SAFER grants create jobs and boost public safety,” Schaitberger said. “Unemployment remains high, and Congress should leave SAFER intact if it is serious about creating jobs.”

The House Appropriations Committee also has proposed cutting \$90 million from the FIRE Act, reducing that program from \$390 million to \$300 million. FIRE Act grants allow communities to purchase life-saving safety equipment – from personal protective gear to breathing apparatus – for fire fighters.

“Even in the worst of times the safety and security of Americans and the fire fighters sworn to protect them must be among our highest priorities,” Schaitberger said. “Not only is it vital for government to fund a strong military to defend our interests across the globe, we must also invest in the fire fighters and paramedics who are on the frontlines here at home.”

*The International Association of Fire Fighters represents more than 298,000 full-time professional fire fighters and paramedics and is the leading advocate for the health and safety of first responders. More information is available at [www.iaff.org](http://www.iaff.org)*

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