

Substitute Resolution No. 30

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT: Legislative & Political

Re: Prioritize Early Access to Medicare for Firefighters

1 WHEREAS, firefighters typically retire earlier
2 than the general population due to the physically
3 demanding nature of their profession, with some
4 retiring as early as age 50; and

5 WHEREAS, these physical demands often lead to
6 increased healthcare needs around or after the time of
7 retirement, including the need for costly and
8 extended treatment; and

9 WHEREAS, many fire departments do not offer
10 continued healthcare options to their retired
11 employees, ending coverage at the termination of
12 their employment; and

13 WHEREAS, purchasing individual health
14 insurance or family coverage can be prohibitively
15 expensive for individuals living on fixed incomes
16 such as a pension; and

17 WHEREAS, the minimum age to access Medicare
18 is 65; leaving retired fire fighters in limbo for a
19 decade or more before they are able to access quality,
20 affordable healthcare; and

21 WHEREAS, the International Association of Fire
22 Fighters (IAFF) has introduced multiple pieces of
23 legislation in Congress that would allow for fire
24 fighters to buy into Medicare beginning at age 55 but
25 none have been signed into law; and

26 WHEREAS, the IAFF Medical Expense

27 Reimbursement Plan (MERP) has been established as
28 a tax- exempt union sponsored medical trust plan to
29 grant firefighters the ability to contribute to future
30 retirement medical expenses during the course of
31 their employment now; therefore be it

32 RESOLVED, That the IAFF shall prioritize
33 legislative and regulatory strategies to provide all
34 IAFF members, public and private sector, with
35 affordable and accessible retiree healthcare through
36 whatever means or processes which offers the best
37 opportunity of success; and be it further

38 RESOLVED, That the quest for early retiree
39 healthcare remain a top legislative priority until it is
40 achieved; and be it further

41 RESOLVED, That the IAFF will identify funding
42 support for the Medical Expense Reimbursement
43 Plan (MERP) as well as any other mechanisms that
44 would reduce the cost of healthcare for retired IAFF
45 members.

Submitted by: California Professional Firefighters, A0005

Cost Estimate: **None**

Annual or Perpetual Designation: **N/A**

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt

CONVENTION ACTION: Adopted as Amended