

Cosponsor S. 1116 – Federal Firefighters Fairness Act

Supported by: *International Association of Federal Firefighters (IAFF), International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE)*

Dear Colleague:

We write to invite you to cosponsor S. 1116, the *Federal Firefighters Fairness Act of 2021*. This bill would create a rebuttable presumption that cardiovascular diseases, certain cancers and certain infectious diseases contracted by federal fire fighters are job-related for purposes of workers' compensation and disability retirement. Fire fighters employed by state and municipal governments in more than forty-five (45) states are currently granted similar presumptive disability coverages.

Fire fighters are routinely exposed to smoke, high heat, and various toxic substances and, as a result, studies suggest that fire fighters are more likely than other workers to contract cardiovascular disease, lung disease or cancer. Additionally, because of the medical services they provide, fire fighters are regularly exposed to infectious diseases. The *Federal Firefighters Fairness Act of 2021* would amend Title 5 of the U.S. Code, for the purposes of workers compensation claims, to create a presumption that a disability or death of a federal fire fighter caused by certain diseases is the result of the performance of the employee's duty. The diseases include heart and lung diseases; various cancers such as brain cancer, cancers of the blood, bladder cancer, kidney cancer, testicular cancer, cancers of the digestive system, skin cancer, cancers of the respiratory system and breast cancer; and infectious diseases such as those associated with a worldwide pandemic and other diseases identified by the Secretary of Labor.

The *Federal Firefighters Fairness Act of 2021* would help provide our nation's federal firefighters the fair and equitable compensation and retirement benefits they earned in the line of duty. Congress recently granted a similar presumption of federal employees suffering from COVID-19. Beyond the COVID-19 presumption, Congress has provided presumptive disability benefits to other groups of individuals, such as military veterans, World Trade Center responders and public safety officers who die in the line of duty.

If you would like to join as a cosponsor or if you have any questions, please have your staff contact Laura Pastre on Senator Carper's staff at Laura_Pastre@carper.senate.gov or Trevor Hustus on Senator Collins' staff at Trevor_Hustus@collins.senate.gov.

Sincerely,

THOMAS R. CARPER
United States Senator

SUSAN M. COLLINS
United States Senator