



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

NEWS RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C. • OTTAWA, ONTARIO • WWW.IAFF.ORG

EMBARGOED UNTIL 1/30/23 at 11:30 PST
Monday, January 30, 2023

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Union Engages National Law Firms in Fight Against ‘Forever Chemicals’

LAS VEGAS – The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) has retained three nationally-recognized law firms to change regulatory standards, demand PFAS-free gear, and be available to be retained by members and families seeking compensation for PFAS-related illness.

PFAS “forever chemicals” are found in fire fighter protective gear and have been linked to cancer, the leading cause of fire fighter death.

At a training summit in Las Vegas, **IAFF General President Edward A. Kelly** announced the union – which has more than 333,000 members – selected Motley Rice LLC; Simmons Hanly Conroy LLC; and Sullivan Papain Block McGrath Coffinas & Cannavo P.C. to:

- Change the regulatory standards and systems that have enabled toxins in fire fighter protective turnout gear
- Demand that all turnout gear be replaced with PFAS-free alternatives
- Be available to be retained by members and their families to seek compensation for PFAS-related injuries

“We need to combat what is killing us,” said Kelly. “Cancer is the number one killer of fire fighters, and for years, corporate interests have put profits over our lives. It stops now. This initiative will accelerate our search for PFAS-free gear.

“These three firms have decades of experience fighting for hardworking families who have been taken advantage of, including recovering billions of dollars for their injured clients,” he said. “This is the challenge of our generation – and I refuse to let it become a challenge for our children and their children. The IAFF will do whatever is necessary to remove PFAS from our gear, protect the health of our members, and the wellbeing of our families.”

The independent firms have established a website, **PFASLawFirms.com**, for members seeking information on the effort.

"It's an honor to be entrusted by the IAFF to be a part of their legal team charged with effecting change in current standards, promoting the replacement of PFAS-laden gear, and seeking justice on behalf of members riddled with cancer," said **Anne McGinness Kearse**, of Motley Rice LLC. "We do not take this responsibility lightly and are ready to pursue, on behalf of the IAFF and/or its members, all viable legal strategies to meet these challenges and bring about needed change."

"Simmons Hanly Conroy is ready and dedicated to serve as the advocate for our brave fire fighters and the IAFF in their battle with cancers caused by PFAS," said **Jayne Conroy** of Simmons Hanly Conroy.

"Sullivan Papain is honored to represent and support the IAFF as it works to protect the safety of its members and remove harmful substances from PPE," said **Nick Papain**, a partner at Sullivan Papain. "Having served as general counsel to the Uniformed Firefighters Association of Greater New York Local 94 for nearly 40 years, we have dedicated much of our careers supporting the wellbeing of fire fighters through advocacy, legislation, and litigation and look forward to doing the same for the IAFF and its members."

The IAFF also hosted the world premiere of **Burned**, a documentary produced by actor **Mark Ruffalo**. It tells the story of how the spouse of a Worcester, Mass. fire fighter revealed significant exposure to forever chemicals in turnout gear following his cancer diagnosis.

"In 2022, with more research on the horizon outlining just how much exposure this made for fire fighters, we hit a breaking point. We decided that this information needed to reach fire fighters as quickly as possible, and thus Burned was born," said filmmaker **Elijah J Yetter-Bowman**. "No sensible person would require first responders to knowingly expose themselves to toxic materials as a requirement to do their jobs – but that's exactly what has happened for decades. Fire fighters need protective gear that won't poison them, and I believe we will get there rapidly."

ABOUT THE IAFF

The **International Association of Fire Fighters** is the driving force behind nearly every advance in fire and emergency services in the 21st century.

With headquarters in Washington, D.C., and Ottawa, Ontario, the IAFF represents more than 333,000 professional fire fighters and EMS professionals. Its members protect more than 85 percent of the population in communities throughout the United States and Canada.

The IAFF is also one of the most active lobbying organizations in Washington. The IAFF Political Action Committee, FIREPAC, is among the country's top one-half of one percent of all federally registered PACs.

ABOUT MOTLEY RICE

Motley Rice LLC is one of the nation's largest plaintiffs' litigation firms. Rooted in protecting workers' rights and fighting for occupational safety and health, the firm and its attorneys have represented fire fighters in matters related to asbestos exposures, wrongful death, personal injury, pension fund fraud, and data privacy. As a Mt. Pleasant, S.C.-based firm, they were involved with the investigations and led litigation efforts after the tragic events at the Sofa Super Store fire on June 18, 2007.

Today, the firm litigates complex cases for individuals, families, workers, communities, governmental entities, and investors in a variety of areas, including representing plaintiffs in

class actions and individual lawsuits that allege contamination caused by PFAS. Their lawyers have years of experience against asbestos companies, the tobacco industry, September 11, 2001 financiers, and the entire opioid supply chain, with additional results in litigation involving environmental contamination, securities fraud, mesothelioma, workplace injuries, and wrongful death. Office at 28 Bridgeside Blvd., Mt. Pleasant, S.C. 29464.

ABOUT SIMMONS HANLY CONROY

Simmons Hanly Conroy LLC is veteran-owned and one of the nation's largest mass tort law firms dedicated to helping victims of mesothelioma and asbestos-related cancers. Headquartered in the Midwest with nearly 250 employees, including 80 attorneys practicing nationwide, Simmons Hanly Conroy is committed to holding corporations responsible for wrongdoing.

The firm has represented thousands of patients and families across the country. Additional areas of litigation include prescription opioids, environmental contamination, pharmaceutical and medical devices, sexual abuse, consumer protection, and personal injury.

The firm is proud to have served as legal representative of several thousand victims and families impacted by the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Office at 1 Court St., Alton, I.L. 62002.

ABOUT SULLIVAN PAPAIN BLOCK MCGRATH COFFINAS & CANNAVO

Sullivan Papain Block McGrath Coffinas & Cannavo P.C. is a New York litigation firm founded in 1927 with a proud history of representing fire fighters injured and families of those who have died in the line of duty. The firm has represented the Uniformed Firefighters Association of Greater New York Local 94 as general counsel for nearly 40 years.

Sullivan Papain was a leader in the efforts to establish the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund and to enact other legislation to serve the families of first responders killed or seriously injured in the 9/11 terrorist attacks or by reason of its toxic aftermath. The firm was recognized nationally for recovering \$611 million from the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund for 900 fire fighters and their families, pro bono, for no legal fees.

The firm was also one of just six firms chosen to represent the State of New York in its lawsuit against the major tobacco companies, which resulted in a record \$25 billion recovery for the State. Sullivan Papain has extensive experience representing individuals injured by defective products and exposure to toxic substances. Office at 120 Broadway, 27th Floor, NY, NY 10271.

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