



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

NEWS RELEASE

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Congress Funds Essential Public Safety Programs in Omnibus Budget Proposals

IAFF wins major legislative priorities, including year-end funding for the Firefighter Cancer Registry, repeal of Cadillac Tax and grants helping communities hire additional fire fighters.

WASHINGTON, DC – The United States House of Representatives passed numerous public safety proposals long favored by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) as part of a final omnibus package with the United States Senate expected to follow suit.

“Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle listened to the IAFF and stood with us for public safety,” said IAFF General President Harold Schaitberger. “These measures will help fire fighters stay safe and healthy on the job and help them protect their communities.”

Leading the way is the repeal of the planned excise tax on high-end health care plans, also known as the Cadillac Tax, marking an important victory for the health and safety of professional fire fighters. The Cadillac Tax was intended to help fund the Affordable Care Act, but the tax would have disproportionately hit fire fighters who depend on quality health care.

Lawmakers also voted to provide \$2.5 million to fully fund the Firefighter Cancer Registry Act, which establishes a detailed reporting system to help track cancer rates among fire fighters. Studies show fire fighters are at a much higher risk than the general public of developing and dying of cancer. The Cancer Registry will help gather data needed to pinpoint causes of cancer and to target treatment.

Congress also increased funding for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program and the Assistance to Firefighters (FIRE Act) grant program by \$10 million to \$710 million. SAFER grants provide cash-strapped communities with funding to maintain safe fire fighter staffing, and lawmakers also preserved a provision allowing fire departments to bring back fire fighters who had been laid off. The FIRE Act grant program provides funding for training and equipment.

Other parts of the bills include funding for the health impact on fire fighters of per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination and a 3.1 percent raise for federal civilian employees, including fire fighters who protect vital U.S. installations.

The IAFF has been a voice for these issues as part of its mission to protect fire fighters and their health and safety, as well as that of the citizens they protect.

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