



# NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



## NFFE News Release

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### Union Backs Critical Legislation to Improve Pay, Benefits, and Support Programs for Wildland Firefighters

Today, the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE) announced its support for The Wildland Firefighter Classification and Pay Parity Act, introduced this afternoon by Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO). The bill would deliver a much-needed sweeping reform of pay, benefits, and support programs for federal wildland firefighters. This includes raising firefighter pay to at least \$20 an hour and guaranteeing annual pay raises. The act also creates a new classification series specific to federal wildland firefighters, ensuring they are properly classified for the hazardous work carried out each fire season.

“As the fire seasons have become increasingly long and dangerous, it is imperative that federal firefighters have the resources they need to protect our country from this crisis,” said NFFE National President Randy Erwin. “Due to the strenuous nature of the duties wildland firefighters undertake, we must support these brave public servants with better pay, housing, health care, and mental health services. This legislation provides long overdue programs and resources that significantly improve the lives of wildland firefighters and their families.”

The Wildland Firefighter Classification and Pay Parity Act would reform health care programs, including the creation of a national service to track chronic diseases caused by exposure to hazardous environmental materials while on the job. Further, mental health services will be a main priority of the legislation, as it establishes a mental health awareness campaign, trainings, and a new support network for firefighters and their families.

If passed, federal wildland firefighters will be allowed to earn retirement benefits for temporary seasonal employment, which will retroactively apply to the last ten years of service. The bill will also offer firefighters the opportunity to secure tuition assistance, and rent-free housing for those serving on duty more than 50 miles from their primary residence. Among many other provisions, the act mandates that wildland firefighters are awarded one continuous week of paid time off each year and reforms current pay schedules so that firefighters are paid upon receipt of assignment until when they return from an incident.

"For far too long, federal wildland firefighters have endured low wages, poor benefits, and insufficient resources, all while putting their lives on the line to protect our country," continued President Erwin. "The time is now to finally deliver for wildland firefighters and provide the pay, benefits, and support programs that they desperately need and deserve. NFFE urges Congress to pass The Wildland Firefighter Classification and Pay Parity Act."

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*Established in 1917, the National Federation of Federal Employees is the oldest union representing civil service federal employees. NFFE represents 110,000 federal employees in 35 departments and agencies government-wide. NFFE is affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, AFL-CIO. For more information, go to [www.nffe.org](http://www.nffe.org).*