



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



NFFE News Release

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NFFE President Erwin: Congress Must Make the Necessary Investment in our Federal Wildland Firefighters

Washington, D.C. – Today, the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE-IAM) held a press conference outside the U.S. Capitol to raise awareness of the severe issues facing the federal wildland firefighting workforce. The event was hosted by Representatives Katie Porter (D-CA) and Gerry Connolly (D-VA). Speakers included Representatives Porter, Joe Neguse (D-CO), Andy Kim (D-VA), as well as Kevin O'Connor of the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF), Bobbie Scopa of Grassroots Wildland Firefighters Association, William Bowser of the American Federation of Government Employees, and NFFE Wildland Firefighter Justin Brown.

“I am honored to represent these heroic women and men who protect our nation’s communities and public lands from wildfire,” said NFFE President Randy Erwin at the press conference. “These are the workers responsible for protecting of hundreds of millions of acres of federal lands and providing an invaluable service to the American people. A lot of folks don’t realize it, but these firefighters often spend weeks, or even months, away from their families, often working 18 hours or more per day, to protect us and our communities. However, these wildland firefighters often go unnoticed and under-appreciated. In many ways, they are America’s forgotten first responders.”

All speakers discussed the crucial work that wildland firefighters undertake, despite unjust wages, staffing shortages, and poor workplace conditions. Members of Congress advocated for bipartisan support of President Biden’s fiscal year 2024 budget, which includes funding for new pay tables, healthcare and mental health programs, and enhancements to housing for wildland firefighters. Many speakers asserted that without significant change, the wildland firefighter workforce would see even more workers leaving the service, putting communities and lives at risk.

“To all the wild land firefighters across the country – let me say, thank you for the job you do every day,” continued Erwin. “Your nation owes you a debt of gratitude. We need substantially better pay, more boots on the ground, improved mental health and medical services, affordable, livable housing, and more. Let’s make the necessary investment in our federal wildland firefighter workforce that this country so badly needs. I want to thank Representatives Porter, Connolly, Neguse, and Kim for being here today and their unflinching support of wildland firefighters.”

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Established in 1917, the National Federation of Federal Employees is America’s first union representing civil service federal employees. NFFE represents approximately 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.