



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



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Senate Committee Approves Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act in 10-1 Vote

Washington, D.C. – Yesterday, the U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee (HSGAC) voted 10-1 to advance the Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act (S. 2272) to the full Senate for future debate. The emergency bill would ensure federal wildland firefighters are not faced with a pay cut of up to fifty percent of their base salaries by making temporary funding permanent for pay raises provided by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021.

Senator Kyrsten Sinema (I-AZ), who introduced the bill last week, said, “Wildland firefighters across our country risk their lives to keep our communities safe. If we don’t act by the end of this year, agency leadership and firefighter associations have testified that we will see massive departures from the federal wildland firefighter workforce, right at the peak of wildfire season. I encourage my colleagues to support this bill.”

The lone no vote came from Senator Rand Paul (R-KY), who also proposed an amendment to sunset the law after two years. The Senator had qualms about the bill because he wanted the committee to have a chance to ask questions of wildland firefighters about why their salaries should be protected, but also to hear from those opposed to providing funding for those salaries. In response, Senator Sinema pointed out that the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a full hearing about the wildland firefighter pay issue, and that both the Chair and Ranking Member of the committee are original cosponsors of S. 2272.

Senator Sinema also offered to Senator Paul, “If you’re interested in meeting some of the amazing hotshots that protect our country during fire season, I would be more than happy to invite some of Arizona’s incredibly brave wildland firefighters to come and share their stories about how much they are committed to saving property and lives in Arizona and the West, and the burden that this places on them and their families when they’re not able to have even a basic salary to take care of themselves and their families.”

“Thank you to the Senate HSGAC Committee for advancing this bill,” said Randy Erwin, President of the National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE). “It is crucial that our federal wildland firefighters are paid enough to make a living wage while they risk their lives to protect our nation from the wildfire crisis. I urge the Senate to debate and pass this bill as soon as possible to avoid the impending pay cliff that will occur this fall should this legislation fail to become law. Moving forward, Congress must also take further action to ensure federal wildland firefighters have truly competitive pay, adequate housing, physical and mental wellbeing programs, and other necessary benefits.”

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.