



A bold voice for transportation workers

May 11, 2022

Vote YES on the Federal Firefighters Fairness Act of 2022

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I urge you to vote YES on H.R. 2499, the "Federal Firefighters Fairness Act of 2022," when it is considered this week.

Federal firefighters risk their lives every day protecting the American people, property, and the environment. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), fire suppression activities involve recurring exposure to high heat, smoke, stress, and hazardous substances, all of which can lead to a host of chronic illnesses. Despite the well-documented occupational risks of firefighting, federal firefighters who fall ill must provide specific details about the exposure that caused their occupational illness when filing a claim for federal workers' compensation. For a federal firefighter with a cancer diagnosis, a leading cause of death among firefighters, this requirement can prove to be particularly onerous, given the difficulty in identifying the time, location, and duration of exposure to carcinogenic substances. While nearly every state offers presumption of occupational illness to local and state firefighters, no such federal law currently exists for federal firefighters.

H.R. 2499 acknowledges the difficulty of finding the precise root cause of a work-related illness in an occupation that requires repeated exposure to various causative stimuli. The bipartisan bill would codify a presumption of a number of occupational illnesses that have been scientifically proven to affect federal firefighters. Instead of being required to assign their health condition to a specific occupational event, federal firefighters would be able to easily access federal workers' compensation if they develop an illness related to the discharge of their duties.

Federal firefighters have dedicated their careers to protecting military installations, federal research laboratories, and VA hospitals, among other federal property, as well as the lives of many Americans. Despite often working in tandem with state and local firefighters, who have the benefit of presumption laws in almost every state, federal firefighters have to meet a higher threshold that requires painstaking retrospection and a time-consuming administrative process in order to qualify

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Greg Regan, President / Shari Semelsberger, Secretary-Treasurer



for federal workers' compensation following the diagnosis of an occupational illness. TTD calls on the House to pass H.R. 2499 to right this wrong and facilitate federal firefighters' access to the benefits they deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Regan", written over a circular stamp or mark.

Greg Regan
President