



Outside Witness Testimony: Submitted to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human Services, Education, & Related Agencies by Michaela Campbell, Director of Government Affairs for the Congressional Fire Services Institute  
Regarding: Department of Health & Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – National Firefighter Registry, Firefighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program, National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL), World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP)

April 9, 2025

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health & Human Services, Education, &  
Related Agencies  
House Appropriations Committee  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health & Human Services, Education, &  
Related Agencies  
House Appropriations Committee  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of the nation's fire and emergency services, we write today concerning the National Firefighter Registry (NFR) for Cancer, the Firefighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program (FFFIPP), the National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL), and the World Trade Center Health Program. We are deeply concerned about the effects on these programs due to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Reductions in Force (RIFs) at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). This has occurred despite clear Congressional support for these programs via consistent authorizations and annual appropriations. We request that the Committee ensure that these programs have the funding that was authorized and appropriated by Congress to protect firefighters and personnel necessary to carry out these programs comprehensively. These programs provide essential support to America's fire and EMS personnel and must be restored and supported.

## **I. National Firefighter Registry (NFR) for Cancer**

The National Firefighter Registry for Cancer represents a landmark initiative in understanding and addressing the occupational cancer risks faced by firefighters. Given the growing body of research demonstrating the elevated cancer risk associated with firefighting, the NFR is a crucial tool for collecting data, identifying trends, and informing policies that enhance firefighter health protections. The registry is essential for advancing research into cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment, ensuring that our firefighters receive the care and protections they deserve.

Just last year, Congress spoke in an almost unanimous fashion on the value of the NFR by voting to reauthorize it. The Firefighter Cancer Registry Reauthorization Act (P.L.118-147) passed the House on suspension by a vote of 413-7 and the Senate by voice vote. The original authorization, the Firefighter Cancer Registry Act (P.L.115-194), became law in 2017 by unanimous consent in both chambers. This critical legislation reauthorized the registry through FY2028 and provided an authorization level of \$5.5 million per year – in line with the funding provided by the Committee for the last several years. Please ensure the National Firefighter Registry has the funding (\$5.5 million for FY2026) and personnel that were authorized by Congress to help protect America’s fire and emergency services from the scourge of occupational cancer.

## **II. Firefighter Fatality Investigation and Prevention Program (FFFIPP)**

The FFFIPP plays an indispensable role in identifying the causes of firefighter line-of-duty deaths and developing recommendations to prevent future tragedies. Through comprehensive investigations and in-depth analysis, FFFIPP provides invaluable insights that help fire departments nationwide improve training, operational procedures, and safety protocols. These efforts have directly contributed to reducing firefighter fatalities and injuries, making our fire service community safer and more resilient.

We must ensure that firefighters can operate as safely as possible in their jobs, and the FFFIPP is an important partner in improving firefighter health and safety. As such, we request that the FFFIPP receive \$2 million for FY2026 and that the program be restored with appropriate staff to carry out its life-saving mission.

## **III. National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL)**

The NPPTL plays a critical role in ensuring the safety and effectiveness of personal protective equipment (PPE) for first responders. NPPTL conducts research on all types of PPE effectiveness and innovation, develops best practices and recommendations for PPE, and creates guidance and tools to help employers best use PPE. NPPTL is particularly known for its work with respirators, including testing and approving respirators used in U.S. workplaces to ensure that respirators used by Americans provide the expected level of protection. This is critical to firefighters and EMS personnel, who rely on respiratory protection in the course of their everyday work responding to fires, hazardous material emergencies, medical calls, and much

more. We request appropriate funding and staff to ensure that NPPTL can continue to protect first responders.

#### **IV. World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP)**

We also want to express our support for this vital program and urge the Committee and Congress to ensure that this program continues to be supported so first responders and their families can receive the benefits they need and deserve. This program has been authorized and supported by Congress in a bipartisan manner and must be preserved. The WTCHP was established in P.L. 111-347 and made permanent in hugely bipartisan fashion in 2019 with P.L. 116-34. The permanent authorization bill passed the House 402-12 and the Senate 97-2. We appreciate the recent reinstatement of Dr. John Howard as the Administrator of the program and we request that the program continue to employ all personnel necessary to function at full capacity.

The will of Congress must not be overridden: please ensure that each of these programs has the funding and personnel that were authorized and appropriated by Congress to protect firefighters. Thank you for your consideration, and your continued leadership and support for America's fire and emergency services.

Sincerely,

Congressional Fire Services Institute  
International Association of Arson Investigators  
International Association of Fire Chiefs  
International Association of Fire Fighters  
International Fire Service Training Association  
International Society of Fire Service Instructors  
National Association of State Fire Marshals  
National Fallen Firefighters Foundation  
National Fire Protection Association  
National Volunteer Fire Council