

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5), Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (NJ-8), Chair of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus Rep. Robert Andrews (NJ-1), and Co-Chairs of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus Rep. Peter King (NY-3) and Rep. David Reichert (WA-3) sent a letter today to House Armed Services Committee Chairman Buck McKeon and Ranking Member Adam Smith urging them to retain Senate provisions to reauthorize funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant (SAFER) and U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) as they go to conference on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2013.

“As you conference with the Senate to reach an agreement on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2013, we urge you to retain provisions in the Senate passed bill to reauthorize funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant (SAFER) and U.S. Fire Administration (USFA),” **stated the Members.** “These improvements are long overdue and passed the Senate by unanimous consent. We are confident they enjoy significant bipartisan support from our House colleagues and strongly urge you to support their inclusion in the final legislation.”

The text of the delegation’s letter of support is as follows:

December 12, 2012

The Hon. Buck McKeon
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith,

As you conference with the Senate to reach an agreement on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2013, we urge you to retain provisions in the Senate passed bill to reauthorize funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant (SAFER) and U.S. Fire Administration (USFA).

The AFG program, also known as the FIRE Act grant program, provides federal grants to local fire departments and Emergency Medical Services to help address a variety of equipment, training and other firefighter and emergency response needs. The SAFER program provides grants to fire departments for the purpose of increasing the number of firefighters to help communities meet industry minimum standards and attain 24-hour staffing to provide adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards.

The Senate language authorizes funding for USFA and the two grant programs through the end of Fiscal Year 2017. In addition, the amendment makes several critical improvements to the AFG and SAFER grant programs, including raising current grant caps, reducing the local match under FIRE, significantly simplifying the local match under SAFER, and providing waivers for communities facing significant economic hardship.

These improvements are long overdue and passed the Senate by unanimous consent. We are confident they enjoy significant bipartisan support from our House colleagues and strongly urge you to support their inclusion in the final legislation.

Sincerely,

Steny H. Hoyer
Co-Chair

Congressional Fire Services Caucus

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

Robert Andrews
Chair
Congressional Fire Services Caucus

Peter King
Co-Chair
Congressional Fire Services Caucus

David Reichert
Co-Chair
Congressional Fire Services Caucus