



“A Glance at Congress in 2012”

Congressional Fire Services Institute
Webinar Series

January 23, 2012

About the Institute

- Established in 1989 as a non-profit, non-partisan policy institute
- Charged with educating members of Congress and their staff on fire and emergency services issues
- Functions as an umbrella organization for national fire and emergency services associations, bringing a “unified” voice to Capitol Hill on the important issues impacting all first responders
- Privately funded, generating our entire operating budget from fundraising programs



Role on Capitol Hill

- A resource for Members of Congress and their staff



Congressional staff extinguish a propane fire at the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute

- Provide objective information on federal initiatives that impact our nation's fire and emergency services
- Conduct hands-on training programs for members of Congress and their staff to provide better insight into the fire service
- Host briefings and roundtable discussions on Capitol Hill addressing salient first responder issues

Members of Congress host a press conference with fire service officials



CFSI Membership: National Advisory Committee

- Composed of 41 national fire and emergency services organizations
- Meets semi-annually in Washington, DC
- Approve resolutions guiding legislative activities of the Institute
- Chaired by a member of the NAC
- Elections held annually with limit of two, one-year terms.



National Advisory Committee Membership

- American Fire Sprinkler Association
- Assoc. of Public-Safety Communications Officials International
- Center for Campus Fire Safety
- Center for Public Safety Excellence
- Federation of Fire Chaplains
- Fire and Emergency Manufacturers and Services Association
- Fire Apparatus Manufacturers' Association
- Fire Chief Magazine
- Fire Department Safety Officers Association
- Fire Engineering Magazine
- Firehouse Magazine
- The George Washington Univ. Homeland Security Policy Institute
- Institution of Fire Engineers—United States of America Branch
- Insurance Services Office
- International Association of Arson Investigators
- International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters
- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- International Association of Fire Fighters
- International Code Council
- International Fire Buff Associates
- International Fire Marshals Association
- International Fire Service Training Association
- International Municipal Signal Association
- International Society of Fire Service Instructors
- JEMS Communications (JEMS and Fire Rescue Magazine)
- National Association of State Fire Marshals
- National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications
- National Emergency Equipment Dealers Association
- National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
- National Fire Protection Association
- National Fire Sprinkler Association
- National Institute of Standards and Technology
- National Society of Executive Fire Officers
- National Volunteer Fire Council
- North American Fire Training Directors
- Safe Kids USA
- SimplexGrinnell
- Society of Fire Protection Engineers
- Underwriters Laboratories
- USA Sprinkler Fitters Association
- VFIS

Looking back at 2011

What was Accomplished?

- Congress is split
 - Democrats control the Senate, Republicans control the House
 - Reluctance to meet in the middle
 - Approximately 90 bills signed into law in the 112th Congress
- H.R. 1473, the Department of Defense & Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act of 2011
 - Funds FIRE & SAFER at \$405 million each
 - Funds USFA at \$45.558 million
- H.R. 2055, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012
 - Funds FIRE & SAFER at \$337.5 million each
 - Funds USFA at \$44.038 million
- Chief Ernest Mitchell, Jr. appointed U.S. Fire Administrator

Looking ahead at 2012

What Needs to be Done?

- Several important pieces of legislation introduced in 2011, including
 - S. 550/H.R. 2269, the Fire Grants Reauthorization Act
 - S. 911, the Public Safety Spectrum and Wireless Innovation Act
 - H.R. 1792/S. 1035, the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act
 - Comprehensive list of fire service legislation available at www.cfsi.org
- Expect Congress to consider legislation reauthorizing the United States Fire Administration
- Congress will also need to tackle Fiscal Year 2013 spending bills
- Extension of Payroll Tax-cut will be one of the first issues considered in 2012

Looking ahead at 2012

FIRE/SAFER REAUTHORIZATION

- S. 550 was introduced by Senator Joseph Lieberman (CT) on March 10, 2011.
- H.R. 2269 was introduced by Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX-30) on June 22, 2011.
- House passed the legislation in 111th Congress, Senate failed to act.
- Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee approved legislation on May 18, 2011.

Looking ahead at 2012

FIRE/SAFER REAUTHORIZATION (*cont.*)

- H.R. 2269 similar to legislation passed in 111th Congress and supported by the national fire service organizations
 - Increases the set aside for FP&S grants
 - Lowers match for most jurisdictions
 - Raises the maximum award caps for most jurisdictions
 - Simplifies SAFER match formula
 - Removes cap on SAFER awards
 - Eliminates match for FP&S grants
- S. 550 contains several significant differences
 - Match for FIRE & SAFER slightly different from House bill
 - S. 550 requires four-year period of performance for SAFER vs. three-year period in H.R. 2269
 - 5% match for FP&S, allows in-kind match
 - Coburn Sunset Amendment would eliminate the programs on October 1, 2016

Looking ahead at 2012

FIRE SPRINKLER INCENTIVE ACT

- Legislation to promote retrofit of automatic fire sprinklers in commercial properties using tax incentives
- H.R. 1792/S. 1035 have a slightly different structure than in the past
 - Section 179 tax treatment- Section 179 of the tax code allows small and medium sized businesses to write off the full cost of equipment purchases like machines, equipment, vehicles, and computers in a single year. Fire sprinkler systems are not currently a 179 property and the FSIA would make them eligible for 179 tax treatment.
 - High-Rise Retrofits- This legislation will provide a financial incentive to high-rise building owners to install sprinkler systems by reducing the current depreciation schedule to 15 years. This reduction will also put sprinkler improvements more in line with the current tax code that allows 15 year depreciation for leasehold improvements.

Looking ahead at 2012

D-BLOCK

- S. 911 introduced by Senator John D. Rockefeller, IV (WV) on May 9, 2011
- The legislation provides public safety with an additional 10 megahertz of spectrum to support a national, interoperable wireless broadband network.
 - Allocates the D-block (10 MHz of spectrum in the upper 700 MHz band) to public safety
 - Would allow the build out of a 20 MHz network
- Demand for public safety broadband services is increasing at a phenomenal rate
- Public Safety needs a robust network capable of providing mission critical-grade communication in the case of a natural disaster, terrorist attack or other major emergency

Looking ahead at 2012

UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION REAUTHORIZATION

- USFA currently authorized through Fiscal Year 2012
- House Science, Space, and Technology Committee & Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee are the principle committees of jurisdiction
- National fire and emergency services organizations are currently working with USFA and Congress to draft legislation

Looking ahead at 2012

SAFER BUILDING CODES INCENTIVE ACT

- H.R. 2069 introduced by Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart (FL-21) on June 1, 2011
- Creates an incentive for states to adopt and enforce nationally recognized model building codes
 - States would qualify for an additional 4% of funding available for post-disaster grants
 - Not a mandate but an incentive
- According to a FEMA-commissioned study conducted by the National Institute of Building Sciences, every \$1 spent on hazard mitigation provides the nation with \$4 in future benefits

Looking ahead at 2012

OUTLOOK FOR 2012

- Expect reintroduction of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Act
- Continue to work on several other important bills including, but not limited to –
 - H.R. 376/S. 1911 Volunteer Emergency Services Recruitment & Retention Act
 - H.R. 1066 Federal Firefighters Fairness Act
 - H.R. 1199/S. 620 Campus Fire Safety Education Act
 - H.R. 3250/S. 1766 Hon. Stephanie Tubbs Jones College Fire Prevention Act
- Presidential election years traditionally lead to abbreviated legislative sessions
 - Members of Congress are campaigning for their seats and in support of their party's Presidential candidate
 - Reluctant to act on any potentially contentious issues in an election year
 - Congress struggling to increase fiscal responsibility while still addressing important policy issues

Looking ahead at 2012

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- It's important for the fire service to engage Congress both in Washington D.C. and at home
 - Visit your Members' district offices
 - Invite them to local fire service events
 - Build an ongoing relationship with Members and staff
- Set politics aside. Disasters don't care if you're liberal or conservative
 - The fire service has found success on Capitol Hill because we engage both sides of the political aisle. We all have our own personal beliefs, but it takes cooperation to enact good policy.
- Encourage your members of Congress to join the Congressional Fire Services Caucus
 - Fire Caucus membership list is available at http://www.cfsi.org/Congress_Legislation/caucus.cfm

Looking ahead at 2012

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER THESE THREE QUESTIONS FROM YOUR MEMBER?

- How would you define the role of today's fire and emergency services?
- Why a need for greater federal support?
- What information/data do you have that justifies the benefits of the legislation you want your member to support?

Looking ahead at April, 2012

“LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP”

24th Annual National Fire and Emergency Services Dinner and Seminars

April 25-26, 2012

Washington Hilton

- Two-day program to engage our elected leaders with fire service leaders in discussions about federal fire service issues
- 2,000 fire and emergency services officials expected to attend
- Annual dinner to pay tribute to leaders in public safety. CFSI website (www.cfsi.org) contains information about our national awards program

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



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