

## **Resolution Expressing Continued Support for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program**

Whereas, by creating the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program prior to September 11, 2001, Congress recognized the day to day needs of America's fire service and asserted that it is the policy of the Federal Government to strengthen public safety by partnering with local fire departments to help provide training and equipment to our nation's firefighters to meet their basic needs.

Whereas, the program benefits our nation as a whole by providing local fire departments with much-needed resources to address the needs of over 30,000 fire departments and one million fire and rescue personnel.

Whereas, local fire departments throughout the nation respond to 17 million calls annually ranging from structural fire suppression, emergency medical response, hazardous materials incidents, technical rescues, wildland fire protection, natural disasters and events of terrorism.

Whereas, in the three years the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program has been in existence, it has become one of the most effective programs conducted by the federal government, with a streamlined system to quickly and effectively award grant funding directly to the departments that need it most.

Whereas, we recognize there are still people that are opposed to this program and would rather see it abolished and its funding rolled into terrorism block grant programs, which provide funding through the states.

Whereas, despite the opinion of many fire service organizations that the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program should remain within the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), located in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security, the FY 2004 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill moved the program to the Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP).

Whereas, the bill did, however, contains the following provisions that will help ensure the program remains successful:

- The grants are to remain a separate appropriation within ODP;
- The Department of Homeland Security must continue current administrative practices for the grant program;
- The USFA must remain involved during grant administration;
- The peer review process of applications remains.

*Therefore, be it resolved that the Congressional Fire Services Institute and the Members of the National Advisory Committee work to ensure that ODP continues to administer the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program in the same fashion as it has been in previous years, in accordance with the language of the FY 2004 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill.*

Resolution offered by the National Volunteer Fire Council  
**Fall 2003 Meeting**