

CONGRESSIONAL FIRE SERVICES INSTITUTE



LEGISLATIVE OUTLOOK

117TH CONGRESS - FIRST SESSION



2021

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CFSI NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The strength of CFSI is its National Advisory Committee (NAC). Composed of 38 trade groups, issue organizations, and professional associations—including the leading fire service organizations in the country—the NAC provides a forum where the national fire organizations conduct discussions and develop consensus on important national fire and emergency services issues. Funding for the United States Fire Administration and the AFG/SAFER grant programs, reallocation of spectrum for first responders, addressing fire service occupational cancer, and greater involvement of first responders in disaster mitigation are examples of the types of issues the NAC has supported.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

American Fire Sprinkler Association	International Association of Fire Chiefs
Center for Campus Fire Safety	International Association of Fire Fighters
Center for Public Safety Excellence	International Association of Wildland Fire
Common Voices	International Code Council
Cumberland Valley Volunteer	International Fire Buff Associates
Firemen's Association	International Fire Marshals Association
Fire Department Safety Officers Association	International Fire Service Training Association
Federation of Fire Chaplains	International Municipal Signal Association
Fire and Emergency Manufacturers & Services Association	International Society of Fire Service Instructors
Fire Apparatus Manufacturers' Association	Johnson Controls
Fire Engineering Magazine	National Association of State Fire Marshals
Firehouse Magazine	National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications
FireRescue Magazine	National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
FireRescue1/Fire Chief	National Fire Protection Association
Institution of Fire Engineers – United States of America Branch	National Fire Sprinkler Association
Insurance Services Office	National Volunteer Fire Council
International Association of Arson Investigators	North American Fire Training Directors
International Association of Black Professional Firefighters	Society of Fire Protection Engineers
	Underwriters Laboratories
	USA Sprinkler Fitters
	VFIS

THE U.S. FIRE SERVICE IN NUMBERS

COMPOSITION OF THE U.S. FIRE SERVICE

Approximately **29,705** fire departments in the US:

- **3,009**– All career
- **2,368** – Mostly career
- **5,206** – Mostly volunteer
- **19,122** – All volunteer

Approximately **1,115,000** firefighters

- **370,000** career firefighters
- **745,000** volunteer firefighters

Source: [NFPA](#). Data is from 2018, the most recent year available.

FIRE LOSSES IN THE U.S.

An estimated **1,291,500** fires were reported in 2019.

- These fires caused **3,704** civilian deaths, **16,600** civilian injuries, and **\$14.8 billion** in direct property damage.

An estimated **481,500** structure fires were reported.

- These fires led to **2,980** civilian deaths, **13,900** civilian injuries, and **\$12.3 billion** in direct property damage.

Source: [NFPA](#). Data is from 2019, the most recent year available.

FIRE DEPARTMENT CALLS

TOTAL: 36,746,500

- Fires – **1,318,500**
- Medical Aid – **23,551,500**
- False Alarms – **2,889,000**
- Mutual Aid – **1,512,500**
- Hazardous Materials – **426,000**
- Other – **6,342,500**

Source: [NFPA](#). Data is from 2018, the most recent year available.

FIREFIGHTER DEATHS

There were **90** line of duty firefighter deaths in 2019.

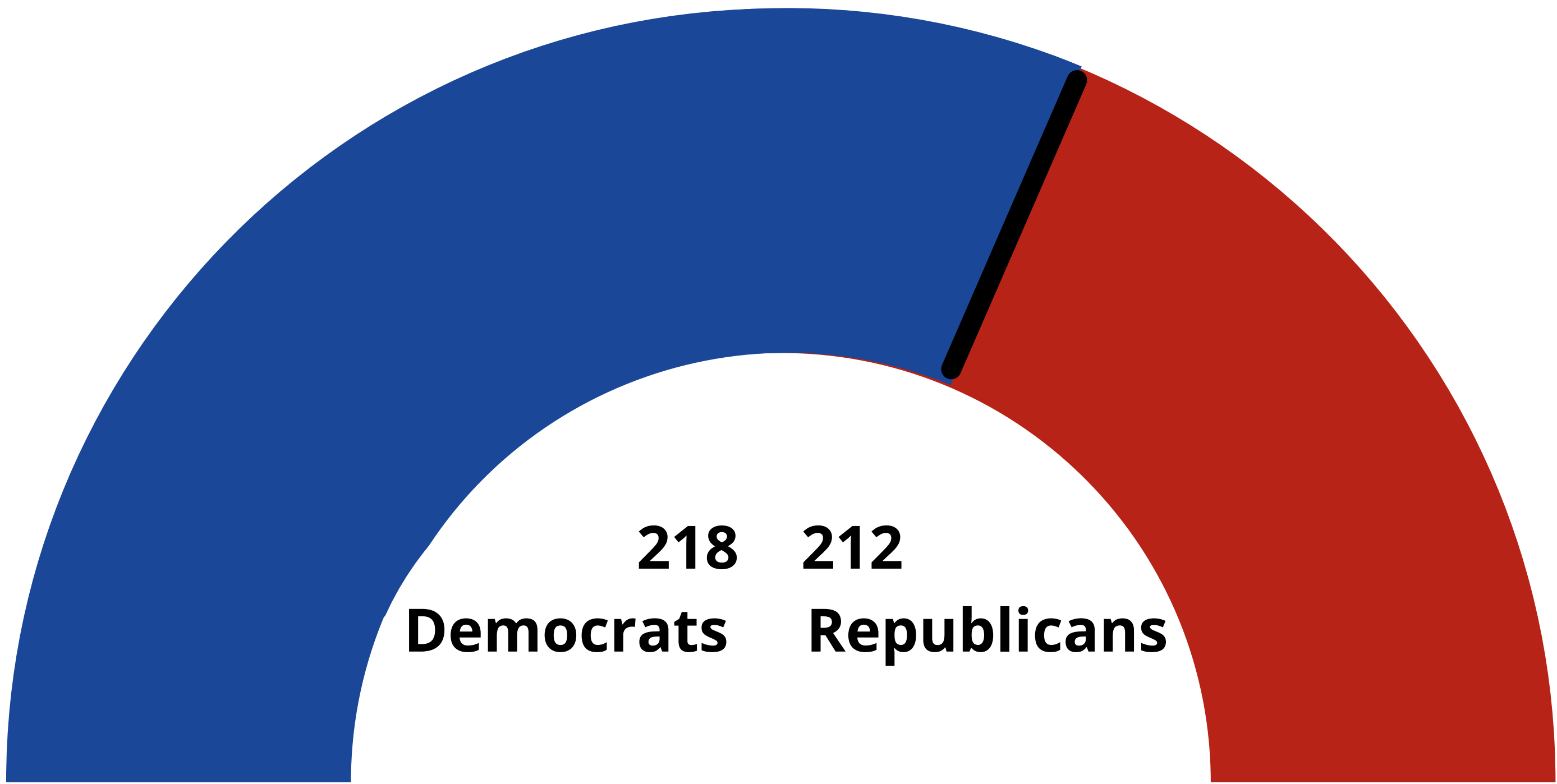
There were an estimated **60,825** firefighter injuries in 2019.

Fatality data source: NFFF. Injury data source: [NFPA](#).

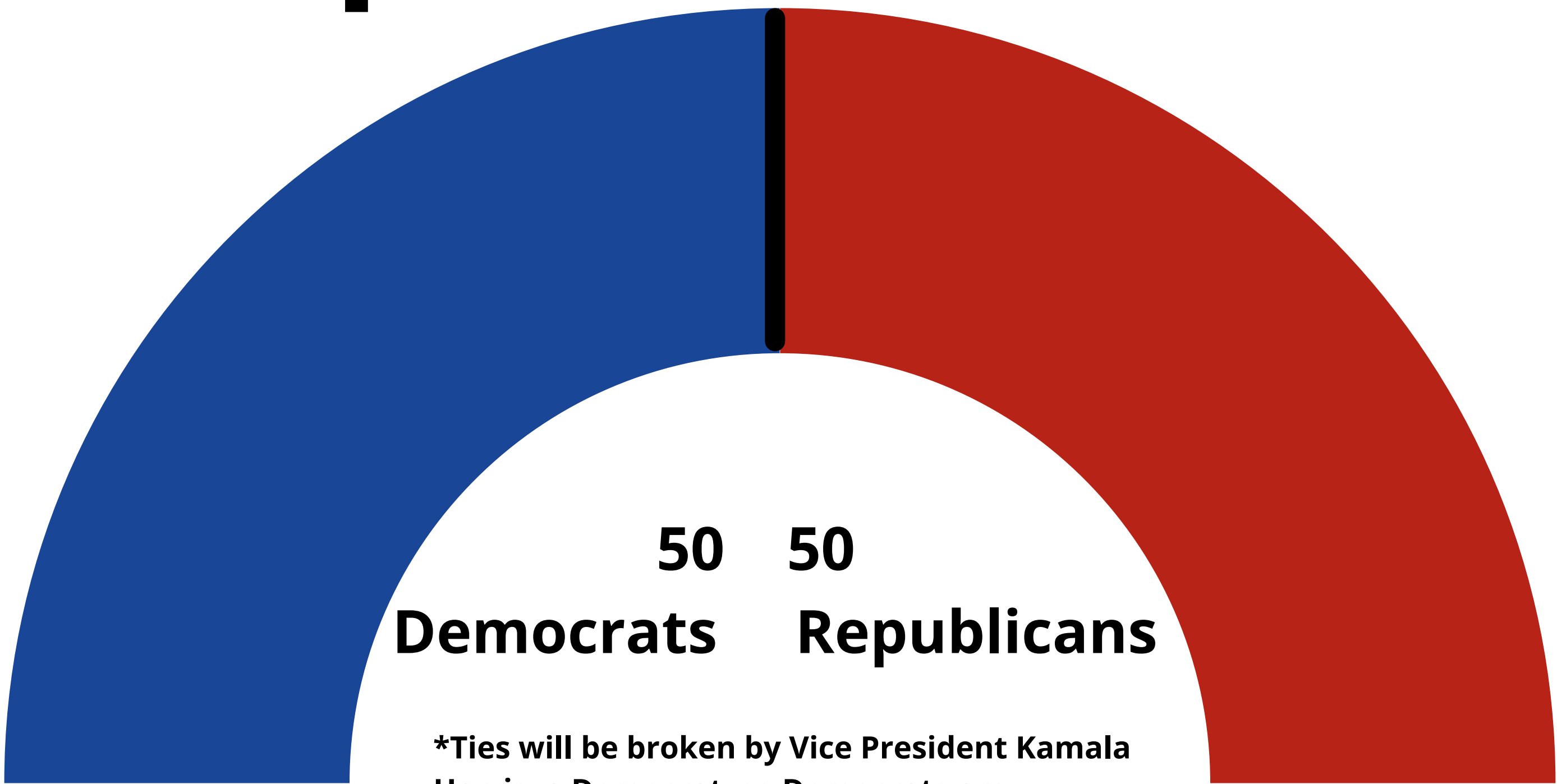


THE 117TH CONGRESS

Makeup of the 117th House of Representatives



Makeup of the 117th Senate



*Ties will be broken by Vice President Kamala Harris, a Democrat, so Democrats are considered in control the Senate.



CONGRESSIONAL FIRE SERVICES CAUCUS: LEADERSHIP



**Sen. Lisa
Murkowski
(R-AK)**
Chair



**Rep. Mike
Bost
(R-IL)**
Co-Chair



**Sen. Tom
Carper
(D-DE)**
Co-Chair



**Rep. Steny
Hoyer
(D-MD)**
Co-Chair



**Sen. Susan
Collins
(R-ME)**
Co-Chair



**Rep. Bill
Pascrell
(D-NJ)**
Co-Chair



**Sen. Jon Tester
(D-MT)**
Co-Chair



**Rep. Brian
Fitzpatrick
(R-PA)**
Co-Chair



CONGRESSIONAL FIRE SERVICES CAUCUS: BY THE NUMBERS



In 1987, the Congressional Fire Services Caucus was created to educate members of Congress about the needs of the fire and emergency services.

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP

208

**58 House
Republicans**

**94 House
Democrats**

**34 Senate
Democrats**

**22 Senate
Republicans**

*numbers current as of April 17 2021



Is your member of Congress in the Congressional Fire Services Caucus? [Click here to find out.](#)
If they are not, [ask them to join!](#)



CONGRESSIONAL FIRE SERVICES CAUCUS: HOW DOES IT WORK?

- The Fire Caucus is **bipartisan** and **bicameral**
 - The 8 co-chairs (4 in the House and 4 in the Senate) are **evenly divided** between Democrats and Republicans
 - Chairmanship of the caucus **rotates every two years** between a Democrat and a Republican
- Being a member does **not** require taking positions on legislation
 - The Fire Caucus is an educational forum where members can learn about initiatives that best benefit fire departments **in their states and congressional districts**
 - The caucus is not about ideology, but rather **recognizing and supporting our nation's first responders**
- Help those who have dedicated their lives to helping others
 - Our nation's first responders work to keep our communities safe every day. The Congressional Fire Services Caucus helps ensure they have the tools they need to do their jobs.

To join the caucus, please email update@cfsi.org

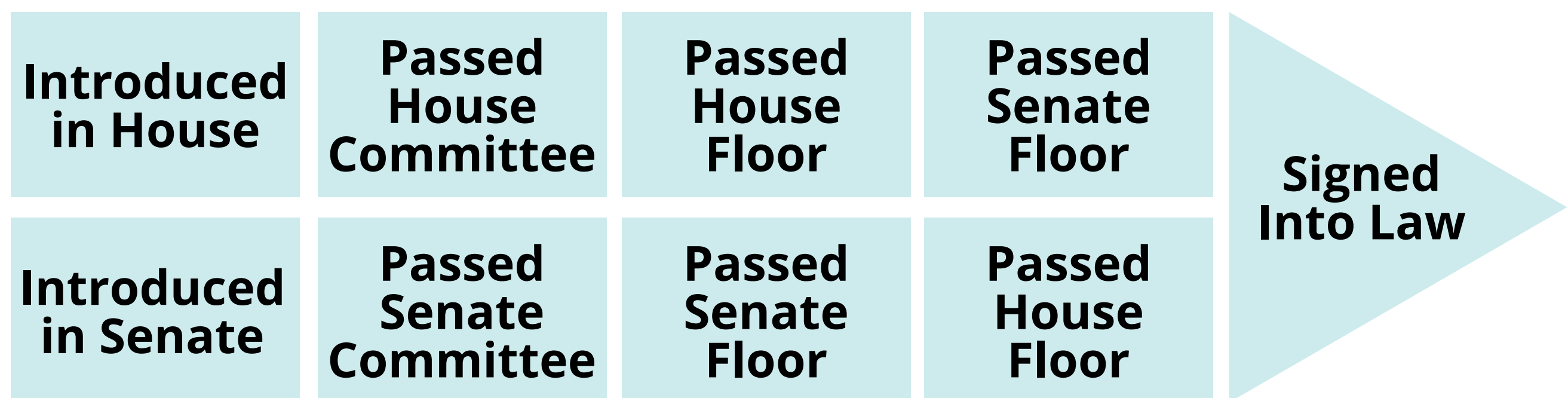


LEGISLATIVE OVERVIEW

The legislative process determines how bills are introduced and the steps they must follow to become law.

In general, a bill must pass both the House and the Senate in the same form before it can be signed into law by the President.

The Legislative Process



S.##### **VS.** **H.R.#####**

If a bill is introduced in the Senate, its bill number will start with an S. If a bill is introduced in the House, its bill number will start with H.R.



What is a companion bill?

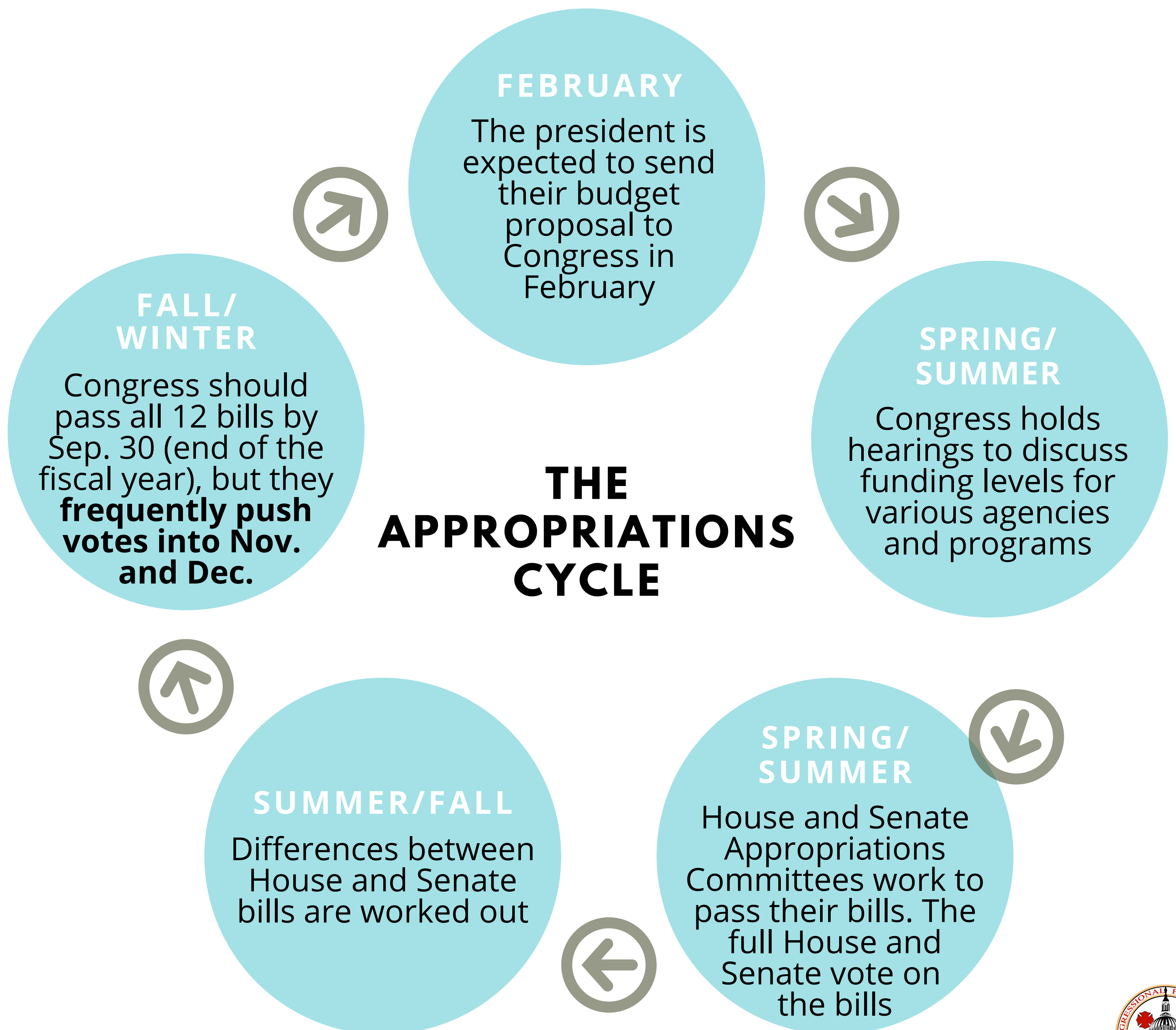
If a bill is referred to as a "companion bill," that generally means it is similar or identical to a bill introduced in the other chamber.



APPROPRIATIONS

Terms to Know

- **Omnibus:** passed as one package. It generally provides new funding for agencies and programs in all 12 appropriations bills.
- **Minibus:** created when some of the 12 appropriations bills are bundled together into a package. It usually contains new funding for only those appropriations bills in the package and takes no action on the other bills.
- **Continuing Resolution (CR):** a spending measure that temporarily funds federal programs at the prior year's funding level until Congress passes new funding.



CFSI LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

117TH CONGRESS



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

FOR THE 117TH CONGRESS

1. Addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the fire and emergency services, including prioritizing fire and EMS personnel for vaccines, testing, and PPE.
2. Increasing funding for vital fire service grant programs, as well as other federal programs and agencies that provide training, equipment, and resources in support of our nation's firefighters and emergency services personnel.
3. Authorizing and funding federal programs that help to improve firefighter mental and physical health.
4. Advocating for legislation that improves Americans' fire and life safety through research and incentivizing detection, alarm, and suppression technology.
5. Generally, ensuring fire and emergency services personnel have what they need to do their jobs safely and effectively.



COVID-19 - FIRE AND EMS: VACCINES, TESTING, AND PPE

Background



Fire and EMS personnel come into **direct contact with COVID-19-infected individuals** in the course of their daily job requirements.



COVID-19 contact can happen on calls where COVID is known, as well as unrelated calls (e.g. responding to a house fire where someone on the scene happens to have COVID-19).



Limited access to testing can result in some fire service personnel **working without knowing they have COVID-19**, while delays in test results can lead to **longer-than-necessary quarantines** for personnel who do not have the virus.



Fire and EMS personnel must also have **access to PPE to perform their job safely**, which can be challenging given PPE shortages.



FIRE SERVICE GRANT PROGRAMS

Background



Due to the pandemic and the economic downturn, **fire department funding is down.**



Conversely, **the pandemic has increased the need** for fire and emergency services.



The pandemic has **negatively affected recruitment and training** of new firefighters, **as well as retention** of existing firefighters.



This **compounds recruitment and retention challenges** that the fire and emergency services were already facing pre-pandemic.



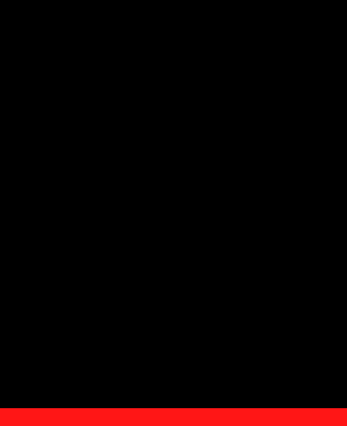
The AFG and SAFER grant programs provide funding directly to fire departments in need, minimizing burdensome administrative processes.



AFG and SAFER are authorized for approximately \$750 million each, but in the last 10 years, they haven't received anywhere near that level of funding. FY2021 funding was set at \$360 million per program.



U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION



Background



USFA is the lead federal agency for the fire and emergency services, providing support and leadership in the areas of training, education, research, and data collection



Each year, USFA provides **training to approximately 100,000 fire and emergency service personnel** through the National Fire Academy (NFA).



USFA also collects important data and conducts research to reduce the threat of fire and other dangers in local communities.



Over the past decade, USFA's budget has remained below the **authorized level of approximately \$76.5 million** per year through FY2023.



In FY2021, USFA received **\$49.3 million**.



NATIONAL URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSE SYSTEM

Background



Established in 1989, the US&R system is a framework to help **organize federal, state, and local emergency response teams.**



The system has **28 task forces** that can be sent by FEMA ahead of a disaster, or deployed after disaster strikes.



As the **nation's only self-sufficient, all-hazards, ready-response force**, the system is essential to our nation's homeland security.



Unfortunately, recent appropriations have only covered a portion of the necessary costs, leaving local governments responsible for filling the gap and, thus, impairing local public safety.



In FY2021, the system received **\$37.8 million.**



NATIONAL FIREFIGHTER REGISTRY

Background



The National Firefighter Registry is an important resource to better understand the link between firefighting and cancer, potentially leading to **better prevention and safety protocols**.



Studies have indicated a **strong link between firefighting and an increased risk of cancer**.



Studies have been limited by **lack of availability of important data** and **underrepresentation of women, minorities, and volunteer firefighters**.



During the 115th Congress, both the House and Senate **unanimously approved** the Firefighter Cancer Registry Act (P.L. 115-194).



In FY2021, the National Firefighter Registry received \$2.5 million.



STATE AND VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS (SFA/VFA)

Background



More homes and communities are being **built on land that is at risk of fires.**



This has contributed to a trend of **more destructive and costly wildland fires.**



SFA and VFA help decrease total federal costs for emergency wildland fire suppression by bolstering local readiness and improving local response in the event of a fire.



The programs also **reduce the threat of fire** to people, communities, and both public and private lands.



In FY2021, SFA was funded at \$73.4 million and VFA was funded at \$19 million.



CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING PREVENTION ACT (S.351/H.R.1460)

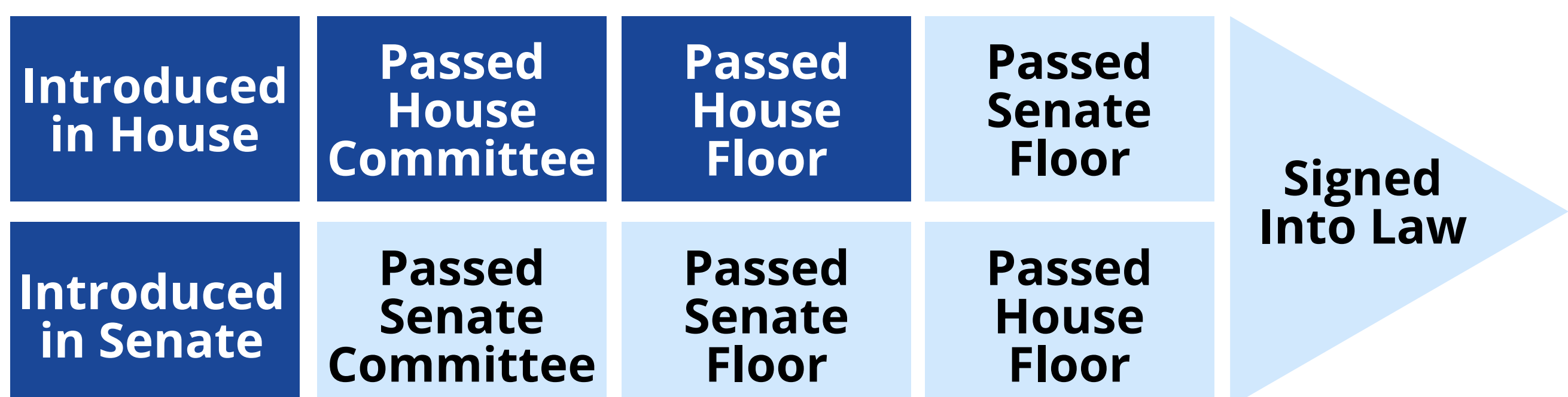
Summary: The legislation establishes a federal grant program to assist states in carrying out carbon monoxide detector installation and education programs.

Background:

- Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that is produced whenever fossil fuels are burned.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are more than **400 deaths** and **50,000 emergency room visits** caused by carbon monoxide poisoning every year.

Status:

- S. 351 was introduced by Senators Klobuchar and Hoeven on February 22, 2021.
- H.R. 1460 was introduced by Representatives Kuster and Carter on March 1, 2021. It passed the House of Representatives on April 15, 2021.



PUBLIC HOUSING FIRE SAFETY ACT (S.265)

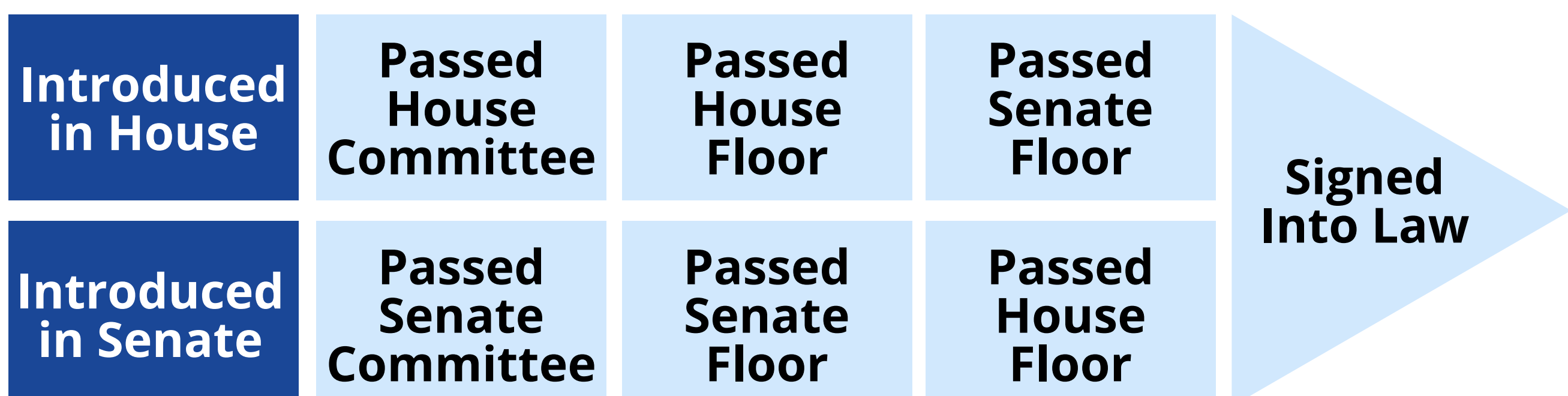
Summary: The legislation creates a grant program for public housing agencies to install automatic sprinkler systems in certain public housing projects.

Background:

- In buildings with sprinkler systems the **death rate per fire can be reduced by at least 87%** and the **property damage decreased by up to 68%**.
- The widespread adoption of fire sprinklers in the last 40 years is one of the elements that have led to an **almost 50% reduction in fire deaths** in this country.
- The risk of **death to firefighters is nearly eliminated** in a fully sprinklered structure and the **injury rate is lowered by 67%**.

Status:

- S. 265 was introduced by Senators Smith and Klobuchar on February 4, 2021.
- H.R.2638 was introduced by Representatives Watson Coleman and Rutherford on April 16, 2021.



HELPING EMERGENCY RESPONDERS OVERCOME (HERO) ACT (H.R.1480)

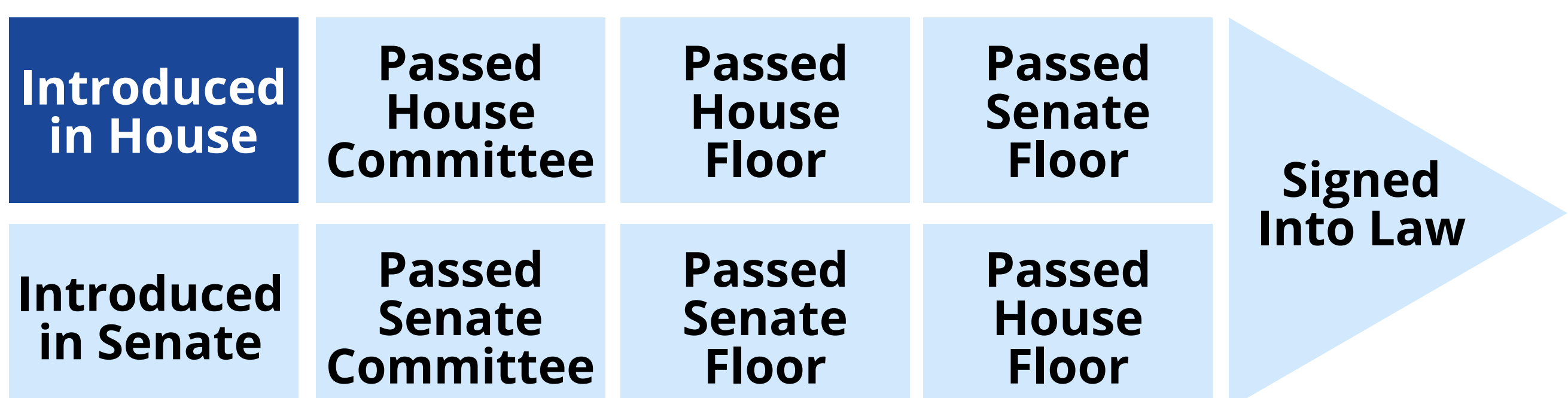
Summary: The legislation provides funding for peer counseling programs for public safety officers, and collects data on post-traumatic stress among public safety officers to assist in developing best practices and improving measures to recognize, prevent, and treat mental health issues.

Background:

- On the job, fire and EMS personnel are frequently exposed to scenes including traumatic injury and loss of life.
- The psychological effects of such exposure can have severe negative effects on fire and EMS personnel.
- There is a great need for more robust mental health awareness, treatment, and support in the fire and emergency services.

Status:

- H.R. 1480 was introduced by Representatives Bera and Fitzpatrick on March 2, 2021.



AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (H.R.1319)

Summary: The bill provides additional funding to address the COVID-19 pandemic, including funding for individuals, businesses, states and localities, and much more.

Fire Service Priorities

Of importance to the fire and emergency services, the bill includes:

- \$100 M for the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- \$100 M for AFG and \$200 M for SAFER.
- \$219.8 billion for the COVID State Fiscal Recovery Fund.
- \$130.2 billion for the COVID Local Fiscal Recovery Fund.
- Funding to address mental health issues among first responders.
- Funding for COVID-19 vaccines, testing, etc.

Status:

- H.R. 1319 was signed into law on March 11, 2021.

