



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS®

HAROLD A. SCHAITBERGER
General President

EDWARD A. KELLY
General Secretary-Treasurer

February 26, 2021

Member of Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the more than 324,000 professional fire fighters and emergency medical personnel on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, I am writing to ask for your vote in favor of H.R. 1319, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. This important legislation builds on the unfinished work of previous COVID-related legislation by providing state and local governments the resources they need in the wake of the pandemic and provides fire fighters and emergency medical personnel necessary protections to ensure they stay safe and healthy on the job.

Fire departments are facing deep budget cuts in the wake of the current economic crisis, including potential fire fighter layoffs and reductions in force. The American Rescue Plan can help overcome these shortfalls by providing significant resources to local governments and providing needed flexibility in the use of such funds. The Act also includes numerous provisions to protect the health and safety of fire fighters and other frontline responders, allowing them to continue serving their communities. Specifically, the Act:

- Provides \$195.3 billion for states and \$130.2 billion for local governments to address COVID-related expenses and replace lost revenue stemming from the public health emergency.
- Provides \$80 million for training to address suicide, burnout, and behavioral health conditions, including substance abuse among public safety officers and health care professionals.
- Establishes a COVID-19 presumption under federal workers' compensation to ensure federal fire fighters who become ill from COVID-19 receive necessary benefits.
- Guarantees paid emergency leave for civilian federal employees, including fire fighters, to care for family members due to COVID.

Overall, the American Rescue Plan will help provide fire fighters the resources and benefits they need to continue serving their communities at this difficult and dangerous time. Again, we fully support this important legislation and urge you to vote in its favor.

Thank you for your consideration and your support of the nation's frontline workers.

Sincerely,

Harold A. Schaitberger
General President