



## H.R. 4847 – United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

H.R. 4847 was introduced by Representative Harry Mitchell (D-AZ) and Representative Phil Gingrey (R-GA) and reported out of the Committee on Science and Technology by voice vote on February 27, 2008. It is expected to be considered under a structured rule on April 2, 2008.

The bill reauthorizes the United States Fire Administration (USFA) through 2012. The USFA, a part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is charged with reducing the life and economic losses due to fire and related emergencies in the United States.

H.R. 4847 expands the list of training activities for the National Fire Academy Training Program and provides the U.S. Fire Administrator with contract authority to augment services at the Academy. In addition, it requires the Administrator to include fire-based emergency medical services in his liaison and coordination across all Federal agencies.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that enacting the bill would cost \$291 million over five years.

### FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 4847 is being considered on the floor under a structured rule. The Rule:

- Provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Science and Technology.
- Waives all points of order against consideration of the bill except those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI.
- Provides that, in lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Science and Technology now printed in the bill, the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in part A of the Rules Committee report accompanying the resolution shall be considered as an original bill for the purpose of amendment and shall be considered as read.
- Waives all points of order against the amendment in the nature of a substitute printed in part A of the Rules Committee report except those arising under clause 10 of rule XXI.
- Makes in order only those amendments printed in part B of the Rules Committee report accompanying the resolution.
- Provides that the amendments made in order may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole.
- Waives all points of order against the amendments printed in part B of the report except for those arising under clause 9 or 10 of rule XXI.



- Provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

This legislation was introduced by Representative Harry Mitchell (D-AZ) and Representative Phil Gingrey (R-GA) on December 19, 2007. The bill was reported as amended, by voice vote, from the Committee on Science and Technology on February 27, 2008.

H.R. 4847 is expected to be considered on the House floor on April 3, 2008.

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## BACKGROUND

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Congress established the National Fire Prevention and Control Administration in 1974 as a part of the Department of Commerce. The Administration was renamed the United States Fire Administration in 1978, and in 1979, the USFA became a part of the newly created FEMA under President Jimmy Carter's Reorganization Plan No. 3.

The mission of the USFA is "to reduce life and economic losses due to fire and related emergencies, through leadership, advocacy, coordination and support." Although the United States has made great strides in curbing fire losses, our nation continues to have one of the highest fire death rates in the industrialized world.

According to the USFA website, fire killed more Americans than all natural disasters combined during 2006. There were more than 3,245 civilian fire deaths and 16,400 civilian fire injuries, and 106 firefighters lost their lives during that same year. The USFA reports that direct property loss due to fires was estimated at \$11.3 billion for 2006.

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## SUMMARY

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**Authorization:** H.R. 4847 authorizes \$70,000,000 for fiscal year 2009; \$72,100,000 for fiscal year 2010; \$74,263,000 for fiscal year 2011; and \$76,490,890 for fiscal year 2012 for the U.S. Fire Administration.

**Training Programs:** The bill expands the list of training activities for the National Fire Academy Training Program to include response, tactics, and strategies for fighting fires in areas that cross jurisdictional boundaries, occur at the wildland-urban interface, involve hazardous materials, as well as advanced emergency medical services training.

*\*Note: The wildland-urban interface is defined as an area within or adjacent to an at-risk community that is identified in recommendations to the Secretary in a community wildfire protection plan.*

**Contract Authority:** To augment training at the National Fire Academy, H.R. 4847 gives the U.S. Fire Administrator the authority to contract with nationally recognized third-party organizations that have established training programs that lead to certification by a nationally recognized accreditation organization or organizations that currently provide similar services to another Federal agency.

**Training:** The bill requires the Administrator to consolidate and integrate an incident command training course for fires at ports into the National Academy for Fire Prevention and Control.

**National Fire Incident Reporting System:** H.R. 4847 allows \$5 million from amounts appropriated under this act to update the National Fire Incident Reporting System to an Internet-based, real-time incident reporting database.



Firefighter Health and Safety: The legislation encourages the Administrator to promote the adoption of national voluntary consensus standards for firefighter health and safety, including standards for firefighter operations, training, staffing, and fitness.

Emergency Medical Services: In addition, H.R. 4847 instructs the Administrator to include fire-service based emergency medical services in liaison and coordination activities across all Federal agencies.

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## AMENDMENTS

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*(Below is the summary of the amendment that was made in order by the Rules Committee and may be offered on the floor of the House of Representatives)*

- 1) Representative Bill Pascrell (D-NJ): The amendment would provide that the National Fire Academy Training Program could train fire service personnel in response, tactics, and strategies for dealing with national catastrophes, including terrorist-caused national catastrophes and incidents that involve weapons of mass destruction.
- 2) Representative Bill Sali (R-ID): The amendment directs the Administrator, in collaboration with relevant Federal agencies and departments, to develop and provide information and training to such agencies and departments on the importance of clearing biomass in wildland areas of Federal lands to promote the safety of firefighters.
- 3) Representative James Langevin (D-RI): The amendment is a non-binding resolution demonstrating congressional support for the adoption of fire sprinklers in commercial buildings. This amendment also would demonstrate congressional support for educational programs that raise awareness of the importance of installing fire sprinklers in residential buildings.

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## COST

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According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) cost estimate, "Based on historical expenditure data and assuming appropriation of the specified amounts, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 4847 would cost \$291 million over the 2009-2013 period. Enacting this legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues." ([CBO Cost Estimate](#))

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## STAFF CONTACT

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