



H.R. 642– Honorable Stephanie Tubbs Jones College Fire Prevention Act

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 642 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by the late Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-OH) on January 23, 2007. The bill was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor, but was never considered.

H.R. 642 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on September 22, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.R. 642 directs the Secretary of Education to make competitive demonstration grants to private or public colleges or universities, fraternities, or sororities for installing fire sprinkler systems, or other fire suppression or prevention technologies, in student housing. These grants may cover up to half the cost of installing such systems. Priority will be given to applicants with the greatest financial need.

The Secretary must report to Congress within one year of enactment on the grant program. The bill authorizes such sums as necessary for fiscal years 2009-2011.

This legislation states that applications or negative determinations under this Act may be admissible as evidence in the proceeding of any court.

BACKGROUND

Each year, college and university students experience a growing number of fire-related emergencies. Fires are caused by many reasons, however most are due to a general lack of knowledge about fire safety and prevention, according to the U.S. Fire Administration. Alcohol plays a significant role as well; more than 50 percent of college fire fatalities are under the influence of alcohol at the time. Alcohol abuse impairs judgment and fire evacuation efforts.

Other leading causes of college fires include cooking, careless smoking, and arson. On May 21, 2008, a fire at an off-campus house in Ithaca, New York, killed one student. Eighteen people died in campus-related fires during the 2007-2008 academic year. This is the second-highest total since 2000.

[U.S. Fire Administration – College Fire Safety](#)

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has not produced a cost estimate for H.R. 642 as of September 19, 2008.

STAFF CONTACT

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