

ASSOCIATION OF CIVILIAN TECHNICIANS

Richard Wrenn

National President



Retirement Pay Equity and Work Week Reduction for Firefighters

Unlike other federal workers, firefighters receive only partial retirement credit for their regularly scheduled work shift. Firefighters work a 72-hour week, of which 19 hours are mandatory overtime. They are paid time-and-a-half for their overtime service, but for retirement pay purposes, the government treats all 72 hours as regular work time.

Firefighters' overtime work should generate retirement benefits at the overtime rate. During the 118th Congress Representative Gerry Connolly (D-VA) and Representative Jackie Walorski (R-IN) introduced legislation (H.R.1235) to so provide.

The language of H.R. 1235 also would establish a new requirement that the Office of Personnel Management develop regulations limiting firefighters' "regularly recurring" workweeks to 60 hours, rather than 72 hours. This change is important to reduce stress on firefighters' families, who need greater flexibility in the availability of firefighters to meet family needs—a goal achieved by making more firefighter overtime hours voluntary rather than mandatory.

Federal firefighters protect critical federal facilities and their contents, which have far more value to the nation than the contents of, for example, commercial warehouses. The federal government needs the most skilled and courageous firefighters in the nation; and it needs to recruit and retain them by providing the best conditions of employment. Becoming a federal firefighter should be among a firefighter's highest aspirations. This aspiration will not be instilled without affording superior working conditions.

We request that you now enact both aspects of the bill introduced as H.R. 1235 in the 118th Congress.

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