

Antioch Herald

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## Will Give Local Firefighters and First Responders the Resources They Need for Five Years

Congressman Jerry McNerney's (D-Stockton) bipartisan bill, the United States Fire Administration Act of 2012, passed the U.S. House of Representatives, on Thursday, December 20 with broad bipartisan support as a part of the fiscal year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). McNerney introduced the bill in July to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration (USFA) for five years, allowing the USFA to continue administering grants, creating good-paying and critical jobs at fire departments across the country. The bill will also allow the USFA to continue to provide resources to train and educate the public about fire safety, prevention and preparedness.

"The USFA provides our nation's firefighters with the tools they need to keep the public safe and reduce the damages caused by fire and other emergency situations. Not only is this legislation critical for public safety, it will ensure that we preserve and create good-paying jobs in communities across America," said Congressman McNerney.

On December 5, 2012, Congressman McNerney wrote to Rep. Buck McKeon, Chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, to encourage the committee to include the text of his legislation in the NDAA. Upon passage in the House, the NDAA will proceed to the Senate for consideration before traveling to the president's desk to be signed into law.

Over the last decade, nearly \$5 million has been awarded to the region encompassing Congressman McNerney's district through programs administered by the USFA, improving public safety and education. For example, the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants program created or saved the jobs of over 1200 firefighters across the country in 2009. The program allowed 566 workers who had been laid off to be rehired, prevented an additional 139 workers from being laid off, and created nearly 400 new jobs in our nation's fire departments.

"The USFA provides important public safety information that helps prevent costly and damaging fires. Increasing preparedness and keeping our friends and neighbors safe is a responsibility we all share. I am glad that this important legislation passed the House today, moving us one step closer to making sure our first responders have the tools and resources they need," said McNerney.

The USFA was created in 1974 with the goal of reducing the number of fire-related deaths by half. This goal was met in 1988. According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2010 there were 1,331,500 fires reported in the United States. These fires caused 3,120 civilian deaths – down from 12,000 per year in 1973 – as well as 17,720 civilian injuries and \$11.6 billion in property damage.

The United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2012, H.R. 6229, was originally co-introduced by Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL).