
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 631 Session of
2008

INTRODUCED BY PALLONE, SOLOBAY, CASORIO, BELFANTI, BIANCUCCI,
BRENNAN, DALEY, DENLINGER, DePASQUALE, EVERETT, FAIRCHILD,
GEORGE, GINGRICH, GOODMAN, GRUCELA, HARHAI, HORNAMAN,
KILLION, KING, KORTZ, KOTIK, LENTZ, LONGIETTI, MAHONEY,
MARKOSEK, McCALL, McGEEHAN, McILVAINE SMITH, MICOZZIE, PAYNE,
PETRARCA, PHILLIPS, RAMALEY, READSHAW, ROAE, RUBLEY, SAINATO,
SIPTROTH, STABACK, WALKO, WOJNAROSKI, YOUNGBLOOD AND
YUDICHAK, MARCH 12, 2008

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
MARCH 12, 2008

A RESOLUTION

1 Memorializing the Congress of the United States to provide
2 adequate funding to the nation's volunteer fire departments
3 in the 2009 Federal Budget.

4 WHEREAS, According to the National Volunteer Fire Council
5 (NVFC), the majority of the fire departments in the United
6 States are volunteer departments with more than one million of
7 the nation's firefighters being volunteers; and

8 WHEREAS, Seventy-two percent of the total firefighting force
9 in the United States is comprised of volunteers; and

10 WHEREAS, The NVFC estimates that the services provided by
11 volunteer firefighters across the country save more than \$37
12 billion annually; and

13 WHEREAS, A 2001 study, conducted by the Pennsylvania Fire and
14 Emergency Services Institute, reported that volunteer fire
15 services save the taxpayers of this Commonwealth \$6 billion

1 annually; and

2 WHEREAS, Between 1984 and 2005, the number of volunteer
3 firefighters in the United States decreased by 8%, falling from
4 897,750 to 823,650; and

5 WHEREAS, This Commonwealth has two-thirds fewer firefighters
6 than 30 years ago; and

7 WHEREAS, The continuing erosion of manpower places the lives
8 of firefighters and others in jeopardy since those who continue
9 to volunteer are required to take on additional tasks and
10 responsibilities; and

11 WHEREAS, In a report to the General Assembly issued in
12 accordance with S.R. 60 of 2003, the two biggest challenges
13 facing volunteer fire companies in this Commonwealth are the
14 recruitment and retention of members; and

15 WHEREAS, The expansion of services beyond firefighting to
16 include other types of emergencies, coupled with the increasing
17 amount of time spent having to raise funds for equipment,
18 training and other organizational needs, has seriously impeded
19 the efforts of fire companies to expand their ranks and maintain
20 membership; and

21 WHEREAS, According to the NVFC, the proposal offered by the
22 Bush Administration for the 2008-2009 fiscal year includes
23 significant cuts in funding for volunteer fire companies and
24 other first responders, including a decrease of more than \$1
25 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency State and
26 Local Programs Account, a reduction of \$260 million for the
27 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, a 6% decrease in
28 funding for the United States Fire Administration and the total
29 elimination of the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency
30 Response Grant Program; and

1 WHEREAS, These funding decreases will almost certainly result
2 in fewer volunteers, which will further imperil the lives of the
3 firefighters and the communities they serve; and

4 WHEREAS, The House of Representatives is unwavering in its
5 support for the invaluable service and sacrifice of United
6 States volunteer firefighters; therefore be it

7 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the
8 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania memorialize the Congress of the
9 United States to provide adequate funding to the nation's
10 volunteer fire departments in the 2009 Federal Budget; and be it
11 further

12 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the
13 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania urge the Congress of the United
14 States to increase current funding to adequate levels for those
15 programs that are so desperately needed by United States
16 volunteer fire companies; and be it further

17 RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to
18 the President of the United States, to the presiding officers of
19 each House of Congress and to each member of Congress from
20 Pennsylvania.