

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 26, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Democratic Leader Jeffries:

We write today to urge you to act swiftly to pass the *Fire Grants and Safety Act* (H.R.4090/S.870) as part of an upcoming FY24 appropriations package. Without prompt action, the Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant programs – programs that are of the utmost importance to America’s fire and emergency services – will sunset at the end of FY24. The Fire Grants and Safety Act is a strongly bipartisan bill that would reauthorize funding for the AFG and SAFER grant programs, as well as the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA). All across our country, firefighters and EMS personnel work every day to keep their communities safe, and the AFG and SAFER grant programs are a critical pillar supporting this life-saving work. Time is of the essence to protect these vital programs and we respectfully urge you to act expeditiously in passing the Fire Grants and Safety Act.

AFG, SAFER, and USFA are critical to ensuring that the U.S. fire service is prepared to respond to all hazards. Every year, fire departments respond to more than 36 million calls for service; these calls span all hazards, from structural fire and wildfire to lithium-ion battery and hazardous materials response, opioid overdoses and other medical emergencies, water rescue, active shooter and hostile events, terrorism, natural disasters, and much more. Despite ever-increasing demand for service, fire departments across the country are struggling to properly train and equip fire and EMS personnel, as well as ensure that departments have proper staffing to meet minimum requirements for response.

The AFG and SAFER grant programs are imperative to addressing the needs of more than one million fire and emergency services personnel nationwide. The AFG program provides fire departments across the country with advanced training and essential equipment, including emergency vehicles, personal protective gear, interoperable communications systems, enhanced breathing apparatuses, infrared cameras, and other technologies that help save lives. Thanks to strong bipartisan backing in Congress, the AFG program has helped to train and equip fire departments across the country – making them safer and better prepared to protect their communities.

Much like the AFG program, the SAFER grant program is also a crucial resource for numerous local fire departments – including many volunteer firefighter organizations. SAFER helps these

fire departments cover the cost of recruiting, training, and retaining the firefighters necessary to keep their communities safe. Amid firefighter and first responder shortages in many corners of the country, the SAFER grant program is important now more than ever. Whether responding to a fire, car accident, or a natural or man-made disaster, our firefighters are safest and most effective when they can respond to a crisis with a fully staffed team. The SAFER grant program complements the AFG program by ensuring that departments have enough staff to take full advantage of the advanced training and equipment available through federal grants.

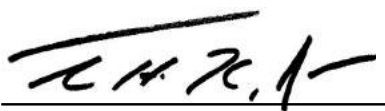
The AFG and SAFER programs are a lifeline for departments all across the country. Indeed, fire departments submit thousands of grant applications totaling billions of dollars each year, demonstrating the dire need to expand federal programs like AFG and SAFER. Between 2018 and 2020, the total amount requested from the grant programs by eligible entities ranged from \$2.5 billion to over \$4 billion dollars each year. The need for these programs is great.

Furthermore, the USFA plays a vital role as the primary representative of the fire and emergency services in the federal government. USFA ensures that the fire service is prepared to respond to all hazards, serving as the lead federal agency for fire data collection, public fire education, fire research, and fire service training. It is imperative that USFA is properly authorized and resourced to ensure that America's fire and emergency services are supported in their front-line work.

No matter the disaster or crisis, our brave firefighters and first responders never waver in their duty to keep our communities safe. Congress has a responsibility to ensure that they can do their work as safely and effectively as possible. We must see to it that fire departments have the staff, equipment, and training necessary to surmount any challenge and to continue protecting the American people. We implore you to include AFG, SAFER, and USFA reauthorization as part of an upcoming FY2024 appropriations package.

Thank you for taking our thoughts on this important matter into consideration, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to support our firefighters and first responders.

Sincerely,



Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
Member of Congress



Mike Bost
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Jared Golden
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Jeff Jackson
Member of Congress



Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Josh Harder
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



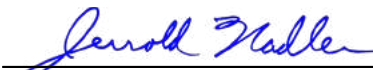
Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Dan Meuser
Member of Congress



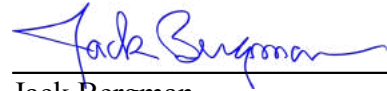
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



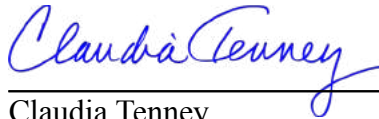
Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



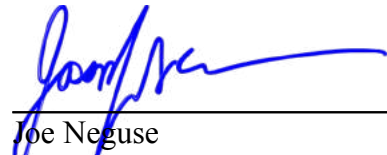
Patrick K. Ryan
Member of Congress



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



Mike Flood
Member of Congress



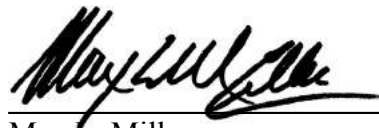
Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



Jen A. Riggans
Member of Congress



David J. Trone
Member of Congress



Max L. Miller
Member of Congress



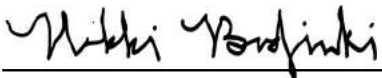
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



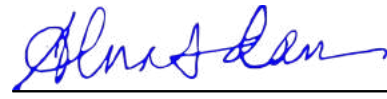
Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



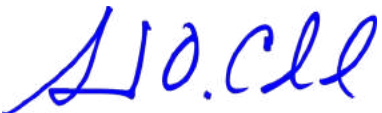
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



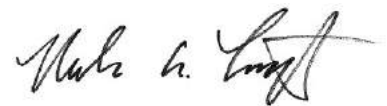
Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



Emilia Strong Sykes
Member of Congress



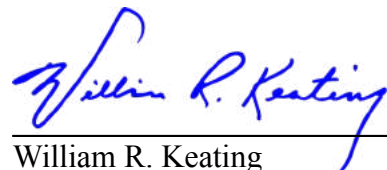
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Nicholas A. Langworthy
Member of Congress



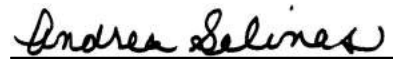
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Young Kim
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



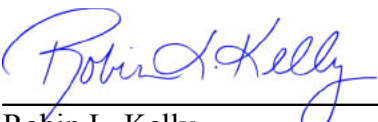
Alex X. Mooney
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



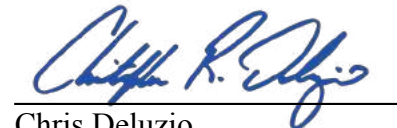
Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



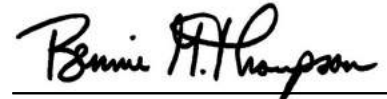
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Jefferson Van Drew
Member of Congress



Derrick Van Orden
Member of Congress



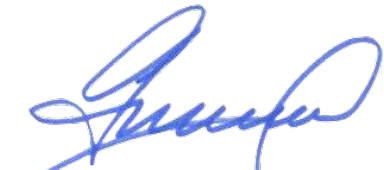
Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress
Kansas Third District



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



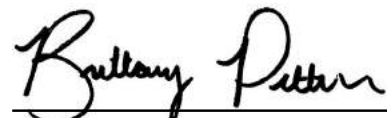
Carlos A. Gimenez
Member of Congress



Susan Wild
Member of Congress



Katie Porter
Member of Congress



Brittany Petterson
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Donald G. Davis

Donald G. Davis
Member of Congress

Ed Case

Ed Case
Member of Congress

Michael Guest

Michael Guest
Member of Congress

Andrew R. Garbarino

Andrew R. Garbarino
Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell

Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress

Mike Carey

Mike Carey
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



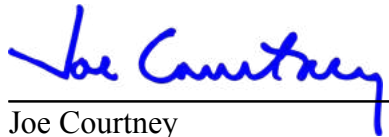
Marie Gluesenkamp Perez
Member of Congress



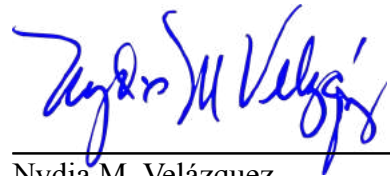
Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress




Michael V. Lawler
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Anthony D'Esposito
Member of Congress



Kat Cammack
Member of Congress



Jennifer González-Colón
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress



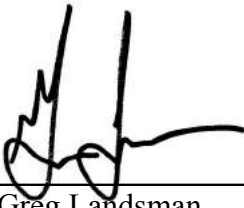
Mary Sattler Peltola
Member of Congress



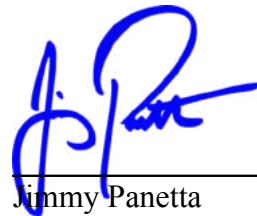
Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



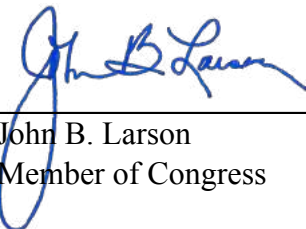
Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



C. A. Dutch Ruppertsberger
Member of Congress



Lance Gooden
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



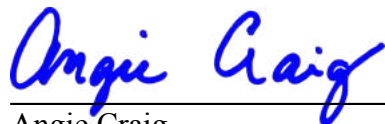
Mike Levin
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



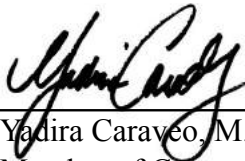
Charles J. "Chuck"
Fleischmann
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



Yadira Caraveo, M.D.
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



Aumua Amata Coleman
Radewagen
Member of Congress



Marcus J. Molinaro
Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



Diana Harshbarger
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress



Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress



Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



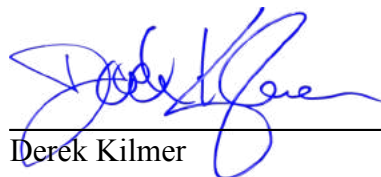
Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Member of Congress



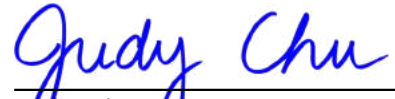
John S. Duarte
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



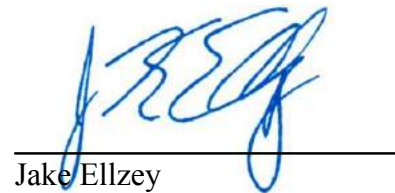
Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress



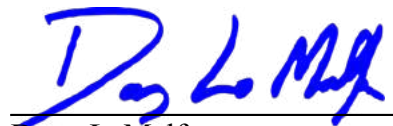
Jake Ellzey
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



Darin LaHood
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



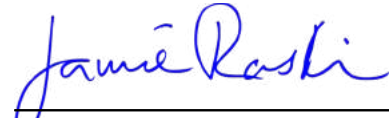
Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



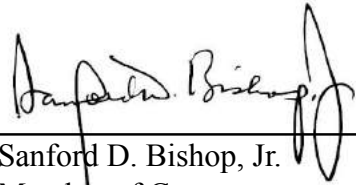
Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Rich McCormick, MD, MBA
Member of Congress



Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress