

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4671

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to develop a Wildland Fire Management Casualty Assistance Program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 23, 2025

Mr. HARDER of California (for himself and Mr. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to develop a Wildland Fire Management Casualty Assistance Program, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Ensuring Casualty As-
5 sistance for our Firefighters Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT CASUALTY ASSIST-**
7 **ANCE PROGRAM.**

8 (a) DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAM.—Not later than 6
9 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the

1 Secretary of the Interior shall develop a Wildland Fire
2 Management Casualty Assistance Program (referred to in
3 this section as the “Program”) to provide assistance to
4 the next-of-kin of—

5 (1) firefighters who, while in the line of duty,
6 suffer illness or are critically injured or killed; and

7 (2) wildland fire support personnel critically in-
8 jured or killed in the line of duty.

9 (b) ASPECTS OF PROGRAM.—The Program shall ad-
10 dress the following:

11 (1) The initial and any subsequent notifications
12 to the next-of-kin of a firefighter or wildland fire
13 support personnel who—

14 (A) is killed in the line of duty; or

15 (B) requires hospitalization or treatment
16 at a medical facility due to a line-of-duty injury
17 or illness.

18 (2) The reimbursement of next-of-kin for ex-
19 penses associated with travel to visit a firefighter or
20 wildland fire support personnel who—

21 (A) is killed in the line of duty; or

22 (B) requires hospitalization or treatment
23 at a medical facility due to a line-of-duty injury
24 or illness.

1 (3) The qualifications, assignment, training, du-
2 ties, supervision, and accountability for the perform-
3 ance of casualty assistance responsibilities.

4 (4) The relief or transfer of casualty assistance
5 officers, including notification to survivors of critical
6 injury or illness in the line of duty and next-of-kin
7 of the reassignment of such officers to other duties.

8 (5) Centralized, short-term and long-term case
9 management procedures for casualty assistance, in-
10 cluding rapid access by survivors of firefighters or
11 wildland fire support personnel and casualty assist-
12 ance officers to expert case managers and coun-
13 selors.

14 (6) The provision, through a computer acces-
15 sible website and other means and at no cost to sur-
16 vivors and next-of-kin of firefighters or wildland fire
17 support personnel, of personalized, integrated infor-
18 mation on the benefits and financial assistance avail-
19 able to such survivors from the Federal Government.

20 (7) The provision of information to survivors
21 and next-of-kin of firefighters or wildland fire sup-
22 port personnel on mechanisms for registering com-
23 plaints about, or requests for, additional assistance
24 related to casualty assistance.

1 (8) Liaison with the Department of the Inte-
2 rior, the Department of Justice, and the Social Se-
3 curity Administration to ensure prompt and accurate
4 resolution of issues relating to benefits administered
5 by those agencies for survivors of firefighters or
6 wildland fire support personnel.

7 (9) Data collection, in consultation with the
8 United States Fire Administration and the National
9 Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, re-
10 garding the incidence and quality of casualty assist-
11 ance provided to survivors of firefighters or wildland
12 fire support personnel.

13 (c) LINE OF DUTY DEATH BENEFITS.—The Pro-
14 gram shall not affect existing authorities for Line of Duty
15 Death benefits for Federal firefighters and wildland fire
16 support personnel.

17 (d) NEXT-OF-KIN DEFINED.—In this section, the
18 term “next-of-kin” means person or persons in the highest
19 category of priority as determined by the following list
20 (categories appear in descending order of priority):

21 (1) Surviving legal spouse.

22 (2) Children (whether by current or prior mar-
23 riage) age 18 years or older in descending prece-
24 dence by age.

1 (3) Father or mother, unless by court order
2 custody has been vested in another (adoptive parent
3 takes precedence over natural parent).

4 (4) Siblings (whole or half) age 18 years or
5 older in descending precedence by age.

6 (5) Grandfather or grandmother.

7 (6) Any other relative (precedence to be deter-
8 mined in accordance with the civil law of descent of
9 the deceased former member's State of domicile at
10 time of death).

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