



Federal Wildland Fire Service Association

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PRESS RELEASE

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San Bernardino, California

On October 26, 2006, the federal wildland firefighting community lost five of its own on the arson-caused Esperanza fire. Three of the five man crew died on the scene of a sudden burn-over while the other two battled valiantly until they too succumbed to their injuries.

On November 5, 2006, nearly 10,000 people including firefighters from across the country, politicians and Forest Service personnel from Washington DC paid tribute to the fallen five federal wildland firefighters.

Every news story, whether it was in print or on TV, local or national, referred to these brave men as firefighters. So too did the Governor of California, Senator Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Representatives Mary Bono, Joe Baca & Jerry Lewis. So too did Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth, Forest Service Fire & Aviation Director Tom Harbour and USDA Undersecretary of Agriculture Mark Rey.

Despite this acknowledgement, the federal government has continued to ignore calls to OPM to establish a new wildland firefighter classification series, instead continuing to utilize archaic, outdated "Forestry Technician" & "Range Technician classifications." Despite OPM's assurance to Congress in the summer of 2005 that it would initiate the work on a wildland firefighter series that would more accurately reflect the "all-risk" duties now performed by these men and women, no such effort has taken place.

As a result, HR 5697, The Federal Wildland Firefighter Classification Act was introduced, marked-up and reported out of the Government Reform Committee by unanimous consent this past June. HR 5697 would *mandate* OPM to begin work on the new wildland firefighter classification series.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has reviewed the legislation and found that it "*would have no significant impact on the federal budget*" and that enacting the bill "*would not affect direct spending or revenues.*" The CBO also indicated that HR 5697 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates.

THERE IS PRECIOUS LITTLE TIME LEFT IN THIS SESSION

WE ARE ASKING ALL OF YOU IN THE CALIFORNIA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO HELP HONOR THESE FALLEN WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS AND THEIR COLLEAGUES BY CALLING FOR PROMPT ACTION TO PASS HR 5697.

**ON BEHALF OF THE NATION'S FEDERAL WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS, WE
THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION**