



Central Station Alarm Association

Signals

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House Passes Bill To Protect Firefighters

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Last week, the House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed bipartisan legislation sponsored by Congressman **Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.** (R-MD) which clarifies the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) definition of a fire protection employee.

Today's firefighter responds to a variety of emergency calls from medical emergencies to hazardous materials spills. These job duties are not exempted by the FLSA, which excuses fire protection employees from the traditional 40-hour workweek. As a result, counties across the nation could pay a tremendous amount of overtime when today's firefighters exceed the forty-hour workweek.

Congressman Ehrlich explained, "This bill keeps pace with the evolving emergency demands on today's firefighters. They perform better and prefer a non-traditional schedule rather than the rigid forty-hour workweek. Further, the counties across the nation should not be burdened with additional and unnecessary costs. This bill will protect the counties from outrageous overtime bills and help fire departments nationwide."

International Association of Firefighters General President, **Alfred K. Whitehead**, stated, "Rep. Bob Ehrlich's legislation recognizes the true role of firefighters/paramedics in America. We respond to every type of emergency situation, and are the primary providers of pre-hospital emergency medical care. Whether it is a child trapped in a crushed automobile, a hazardous materials spill or a senior citizen having a heart attack, Americans know when they call 911, that help is on the way. Thanks to Representative Bob Ehrlich's leadership, firefighters will continue to live up to that commitment."

International Association of Fire Chiefs President, **Luther Fincher**, stated, "We applaud Congressman Ehrlich and the House in ensuring that the FLSA law and regulations recognize all the activities of today's fire service and its role in responding to emergency situations where lives, property, and/or the environment are at risk."

Luther Fincher was one of the speakers at CSAA's Annual Meeting in Maui, Hawaii this past October.

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