

ALEX PADILLA

U.S. SENATOR  for CALIFORNIA

The Wildland Firefighter Fair Pay Act

Every year, wildland firefighters risk their lives and travel cross-country for months at a time to protect American communities and forests from catastrophic wildfires. Yet many of these 11,000+ wildland firefighters are forced to live paycheck to paycheck. Due to existing pay caps, wildland firefighters are working overtime and not being fairly compensated. This inequity impacts agency hiring – already, 20% of Forest Service permanent firefighter positions are vacant, and the federal government often cannot compete with salaries offered by state and local firefighting agencies.

The **“Wildland Firefighter Fair Pay Act”** would increase overtime pay caps for Forest Service and Interior Department wildland firefighters – appropriately compensating federal wildland firefighters for their extensive and intense service. This bill complements existing federal efforts like the *Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act*, which would permanently increase the salary of wildland firefighters. The *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law* provided a temporary pay fix for federal firefighters and was recently extended through the Continuing Resolution.

What the Wildland Firefighter Fair Pay Act would do:

- Provide a **permanent** statutory fix for wildland firefighter pay caps, increasing the total possible take home paychecks from GS 15 – Step 10 to Senior Executive Service II.
- Expand eligible employees to include National Weather Service meteorologists that deploy with firefighters for the hours they work on wildfires.
- Require a joint report from the Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior, and the National Weather Service on the necessary staffing levels of wildland firefighters and incident meteorologists.

The bipartisan and bicameral Wildland Firefighter Fair Pay Act would help address our firefighter workforce shortage by compensating them appropriately for the work they do across the country in difficult conditions.

The Wildland Firefighter Fair Pay Act is endorsed by Grassroots Wildland Firefighters and the National Federation of Federal Employees.

Nate Bentham

Policy Advisor

nate_bentham@padilla.senate.gov

Alexandra Phillips, PhD

AAAS STPF Fellow

alexandra_phillips@padilla.senate.gov