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U.S. SENATOR *for* CALIFORNIA

Support Our Firefighters Act

Co-Led by: Senators Alex Padilla (D-Calif.) and Tim Sheehy (R-Mont.)

According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the federal wildland firefighting workforce is made up of approximately 18,700 firefighters (including fire management and support staff) from the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and from four agencies in the Department of the Interior.

As fires grow in intensity and frequency, it is important that federal agencies can recruit and retain wildland firefighters to do the work of protecting communities. Due to the hazardous nature of firefighters' work, these reforms are necessary so that they have the rest, recuperation and the compensation they deserve.

The Problem:

- While responding to a fire, wildland firefighters are required to work long hours in challenging and changing conditions, such as high temperatures and steep terrain. Across the federal government, agencies have continuously experienced retention struggles with wildland firefighters due to the strain of the work and local and state firefighting jobs with better benefits.
- Federal wildland firefighters are subject to an annual compensation cap, which includes base pay, overtime, and premium pay. During peak fire season, many federal wildland firefighters work extensive amounts of overtime while assigned to an incident. This often leaves our firefighters with an impossible choice: continue working to fight fires and protect communities or get paid. This cap is completely arbitrary and is blatantly unfair.

What the Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act would do:

- Establish a mandatory three-day period of rest and recuperation after a work period of 14 days, and four days after a work period of 21 days.
- Permanently lift the annual pay cap so firefighters can continue working overtime throughout the season to meet the demands of an ever-growing fire season.