

NEWS RELEASE

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Rapidly Approaching Firefighter Fiscal Cliff Spurs Over 11,000 Concerned Citizens to Tell Congress to Act

United States - At a time when the east coast is being choked by harmful wildfire smoke and temperatures are setting all time historical record highs, the public would think that federal wildland firefighters have some job security. However, the opposite is true as Congress seems unable to avoid the rapidly approaching firefighter fiscal cliff.

At the end of September federal wildland firefighters will see a drastic reduction in their take home pay if Congress doesn't produce a permanent pay fix. The "retention incentives" passed through the Infrastructure Bill are set to run out at the end of the fiscal year, and wildland firefighters busy fighting wildfires at home and in Canada are again uncertain about their future in a career they love but financially, physically, and mentally can't afford to continue.

Just last week, the advocacy group [Grassroots Wildland Firefighters put in motion a petition](#) to tell Congress what's at stake if they don't create a permanent pay solution. Within a week's time, over 11,000 wildland firefighters and concerned members of the public have signed their names and shared what will happen if Congress fails to act. Below is a sample of the responses to the petition question "Briefly share what's at stake":

"30-50% of the fire fighting force will leave unless signed including myself. I have bills to pay, I love this job but unless things change, I can't afford to do it." - **Anonymous Wildland Firefighter**

"As a concerned community member, I worry that with this pay cut we will lose our hard-working wildland fire fighters, and the land that so many of us love and recreate in will be unprotected and destroyed."
-**Concerned Community Member**

"One third of the permanent fire employees I know will have to leave the wildland fire profession to pay their mortgage." - **Anonymous Wildland Firefighter**

"As a fire family, this would hit us hard. These men and women who battle fires daily to prevent homes from being burned deserve the most." -**Fire Family Member**

"Thousands of firefighters walking off the job. Many of us are planning for what happens if they do nothing." - **Anonymous Wildland Firefighter**

"15 years of firefighting and my nephew makes more working at Panda Express. It's time to recognize our firefighters for what they do and the sacrifice they have put forth to protect public lands." -
Anonymous Wildland Firefighter



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“17-year Wildland firefighter with the USFS. Without a permanent pay solution I will be looking at changing career paths. I am a district AFMO and the pay is not worth the stress, pressure, workload, and time away from my family. I continue to do it because I love being a public servant. The older my kids get I understand how much they need me and it’s very difficult to provide them the time they need and still provide the financial support.” - Anonymous Wildland Firefighter

Grassroots Wildland Firefighters President Luke Mayfield reported that **“Thousands have signed the petition leaving similar remarks about what inaction will mean to them and their families. A consistent theme throughout reflects a love for the job, being a public servant and protecting public lands for future generations. The financial pressures combined with the toll the job takes have forced federal wildland firefighters to seek better options at the state and municipal levels of firefighting where pay and incentives greatly outweigh federal compensation. I was just in Washington D.C. educating Congress about what’s at stake and explaining the merits of Tim’s Act a legislative option that would help correct the course.”**

There are multiple legislative options in Congress that would provide better career certainty to federal wildland firefighters, but to date which, if any, will be pursued is unknown. Grassroots Wildland Firefighters is asking Congress to act to make sure the federal workforce can plan for a career future that sustains their families. [In a recent congressional hearing, the U.S. Forest Service estimates that 30-50% of the workforce may resign without a permanent pay solution.](#)

“Anyone who cares about public lands or knows a wildland firefighter should be concerned right now about the firefighter fiscal cliff. We want the public to know what’s at stake and to express their support by signing the petition. It is past time to tell Congress to act.”, said Riva Duncan - Vice President, Grassroots Wildland Firefighters.

The text of the Tim’s Act is available [HERE](#). A summary is available [HERE](#). The Petition to Tell Congress to Act is [HERE](#).

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