

2018 NFFE Legislative Week

Washington DC

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We have concluded our 2018 NFFE Legislative Week with what seems to be a great amount of support for our issues. I personally met with 15 offices including 9 offices from Arizona. There was overwhelming support from both Democrats and Republicans for HR3303. I did not speak with one staffer or representative that felt this bill would have anything but full support. I will be following up with a few offices this week and next week trying to lock in some more co-sponsors.

Some possible co-sponsors are Martha McSally (R), Tom O'Halleran (D), David Schweikert (R), Ruben Gallego (D), Raul Grijalva (D), and Brian Mast (R). Martha McSally's district borders Mexico and I reminded her that many of her constituents and families would appreciate her support on this bill. There are a large number of border patrol agents and wildland firefighters in her district. I explained that we are very good about sharing information with our federal employees and would be glad to let them know that their representative is working to fix this inequity. This bill also resonated with Congressman Brian Mast of Florida. He was severely injured and lost the lower portion of both of his legs as a bomb tech in the military. He agreed that without this bill we are leaving our first responders behind.

We also pushed for support with keeping the CCC's open and funded. In the president's 2019 budget he calls for the closure of all 26 Forest Service CCC's run by Job Corps. Both Democrats and Republicans I met with support this type of job program and do not believe it is in danger of being cut. We also discussed the way funds are allocated to the USDA for the Job Corps CCC program. The majority of offices agree that the best option would be to figure out a way to streamline funds straight to USDA. I received a lot of positive feedback on this topic and many felt this is an issue to tackle next year. I plan to report back to NFFE's legislative team as soon as I get any updated information.