

Legislative conference with Forest Service Council, NFFE and the IAM

May 7th through the 11th I was given the amazing opportunity to accompany the Forest Service Council to the United States Capitol in Washington D.C.

We were attending the IAM's Legislative Conference as part of NFFE.

We with the forest service were tasked with trying to gain support and momentum for S.29 The Fair Retire Act which was introduced to the Senate, along with its companion bill H.R. 3303 the First Responders Retirement Act.

These two pieces of legislation in my opinion are crucial to the betterment of all Firefighters and Law Enforcement Officers who serve in the Federal service. The primary goal of these two pieces of legislation, are to ensure that anyone who is in a "covered" fire or law enforcement retirement plan, maintains their higher annuity payments for an accelerated retirement after 20 years in the event they become injured and cannot return to their previously covered positions.

In short if you get injured on the job in the performance of your fire or law enforcement duties, you will still be afforded the opportunity to retire after 20 years regardless of whatever position you may be placed into in the event you cannot return to your original job.

We also discussed the Presidents current budget and how the DOL is looking to close down several Civilian Conservation Centers or CCC's. I think we got our message across to the congressional leaders and their staff, on our opposition to this plan.

I met some amazing new people and ran into old friends and fellow union brothers and sisters.

It was an experience like no other.

I was able to meet with the elected officials from our great country, from all over the United States.

We discussed how the two bills would greatly affect those who were injured and improve their quality of life.

I was not surprised to find that many of whom I spoke with were onboard with the bills, and felt it only seemed rational and fair.

I am hopeful that we who attended made an impact. A strong and meaningful one for not only the Forest Service but for all federal workers.

Again I was blessed with being selected to attend and look forward to next year to push whatever other issues are needed to improve the life and quality of work and conditions for our employees.

I was proud to represent both my forest and NFFE in this venture.

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