

Legislative Conference, Washington DC, May 6th-11th

Annually the Forest Council in conjunction with the National Federation of Federal Employees and the International Association of Machinist has the opportunity to represent Federal employees on critical bills in Washington DC. This year Local #34 was able to be represented in this endeavor.

The week started out at the IAM conference with multiple speakers including Representative Tim Ryan Ohio, Representative Nancy Pelosi California, Senator Elizabeth Warren Massachusetts and finishing with a rally lead by Senator Bernie Sanders, all who support the work and know the importance that the Forest Council contributes and benefits the working employees of America.

The primary piece of legislation covered was S 29 the Fair Retire Act HR 3303 The First Responder Retirement Act. This covered 6 (c) retirement for firefighters and law enforcement in the Federal Government who suffer a permanent injury while performing in the line of duty. The other primary focus was a show of support for the Civilian Conservation Corps/Job Corps centers. The Fiscal Year 2019 has put false statements in the report with a focus of privatizing all of the Forest Service run centers. NFFE had numerous other Legislation we discussed including the privatizing of the VA and cuts to Federal employee retirements.

The highlights I was privileged enough to take part in included:

- Representative Arizona Tom O'Halleran, He supported fully both of our primary goals. He also addressed hazardous fuels and asked if we had received enough money. He was in no hurry and spent time talking about numerous Forest Service issues.
- Representative Don Young Alaska. He did not hesitate to offer to cosign HR 3303. He actually stated he thought that he had already done so.
- Senator Maria Cantwell Washington. Her legislative assistant was very eager to hear as much as she could about the CCC/Job Corps. She stated numerous times that this was something that had Senator Cantwells name written all over it. Everything about the CCC was what Senator Cantwell was all about.
- Representative Dan Newhouse Washington. He was very interested in all of our points. He listened and actually went over our allotted time frames. He seemed supportive of the CCC and had actually just participated in the Ft Simcoe graduation the week before. We also had the opportunity to discuss the status of North Cascades Smokejumper Base.
- Representative Chuck Fleischman Tennessee. We met with his staffer and discussed thoroughly HR 3303. About half way through our time with him, he stated that Representative Fleischman was at the softball field that the mass shooting had happened last year and was only 15 yards from the capital police who took down the shooter. This seemed to resonate with him knowing that the Capital police would be covered under HR 3303.

This experience, the team work, the energy, and the importance of this week cannot be overstated. Supporting the working class of America is so critical and this was a venue that seemed to have direct affect to our cause. Lisa Wolfe's organization, time and leadership should be acknowledged by all. She did an absolutely perfect job.