

## **2018 IAM Legislative Conference**

This year's conference took place the second week of May 7<sup>th</sup> in Washington D.C.

As always it is an exciting and exhausting week of appointments with congressional staffers and the occasional representative or senator.

This year we were supporting the S.29 and companion bill H.R. 3303 The Fair Retire Act that rectifies the unfair penalty when an injured first responders recovers enough to return to Federal Service in a capacity other than firefighting or law enforcement.

Currently, firefighters or law enforcement officers pay an additional .5% into their retirement plan, allowing them to retire after 20 years if they remain in the service as a first responder, However, if they are injured on the job they are essentially forced into a disability retirement. If they chose to go back to work in another capacity, the Federal Government takes the additional contribution they made and they are forced into a 30 year retirement plan.

We also discussed the alarming proposal to privatize Civilian Conservation Centers (CCCs) based on inaccurate data provided to the administration by the Department of Labor. Based on untrue data, the administration has been misinformed regarding the performance and cost to operate Forest Service ran centers. One of the key factors is the omission of the natural resource training the Forest Service Centers offer. Additionally, the Forest Service centers are more efficient than the contracted centers. The Department of Labor used dated information that skewed the cost efficiency of Forest Service centers.

In our presentations, we made good progress and mostly felt supported in both topics. I never experienced any negative response, some were neutral or wanted to do further research, but mostly we had a positive experience.

We were able to get a few minutes with Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell. I spoke with Susan Delbene and her staffer. Most staffers were engaged and interested.

It was a busy week, I logged 28 miles of walking over four days. Sharing a room with Loredia was actually fun, and we enjoyed getting to know each other better.

Besides my crazy Uber adventure (another story for another time), I had a great week, and am glad I was able to participate with such a great group of sisters and brothers. I was satisfied that we made an impact and that this trek is well worth the effort for the entire Agency, not just our bargaining unit. I wish management would consider giving more support to the work we do on the hill. In general, our efforts are benefiting the Agency as a whole.

Cindy White, President  
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