

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 12, 2019

Dr. Robert R. Redfield
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Director Redfield:

We write to comment on the National Firefighter Registry (Registry) request for information Docket No. CDC-2019-0022; NIOSH-326. Congress passed the Firefighter Cancer Registry Act (Public Law No: 115-194) into law on July 7, 2018 to develop a voluntary registry of firefighters that will collect relevant health and occupational information to determine cancer incidence and trends among firefighters. As interested parties, we offer our thoughts to maximize firefighter participation in the Registry and coordination of data collection.

Firefighters across the nation provide essential fire protection functions in a variety of locations, including rural fire districts, small and large municipalities, counties, states, the federal government, and private corporations. To prevent, suppress, extinguish, or control fire and other hazardous conditions, firefighters are tasked with a multitude of responsibilities. We appreciate that the breadth of their mission and responsibilities makes it nearly impossible to define the term firefighter.

The Registry should seek to include an expansive definition of firefighter to capture all serving in the fire service. Any definition must include any position title which includes the "firefighter" designator, such as structural fire fighter, aircraft fire fighter, wildland fire fighter, airport rescue firefighters, and marine or shipboard fire fighter. Any definition utilized by the Registry must account for the numerous designations, titles, and job responsibilities within the fire service, such as emergency medical responder, emergency medical technician, fire service instructor, fire prevention inspector, fire marshal, fire equipment or machinery operator, hazardous material technician, marine or shipboard fire technician, aviation fire specialist, and fire investigator, arson investigator, and fire instructor. However, job titles alone should not be the sole determinate for qualifying participants because of wide variations in organizational structures across the fire service.

We strongly encourage the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to use a combination of the three proposed recruitment and enrollment strategies. To develop an accurate picture of cancer incidence among the firefighting community, the Registry must capture information on volunteer, paid-on-call, career, private sector, and federal firefighters, independent of cancer status or diagnosis. It is also important that specific demographic groups, such as minority, female, and younger firefighters, are encouraged to participate in the Registry. The information collected should include basic demographic information, number of years and specific time of service as an active firefighter, number of fire incidents attended, details of any cancer diagnosis, and additional risk factors, such as smoking or drug use, and relevant medical history.

To ensure robust participation of active and retired firefighters in the Registry, we encourage the CDC to directly contact with people in the fire service. This can be achieved by leveraging relations with national fire and emergency response organizations that represent different groups of currently employed or former firefighters, including career and volunteer firefighters, sub-specialties of the fire service, and specific demographic groups. The CDC should also partner with stakeholders at all levels of government to encourage participation in the Registry. The CDC should solicit assistance directly from fire departments that represent all regions of the country, including urban, suburban and rural environments, and specialized focus or in limited jurisdictions, such as airport, industrial, or military fire departments. The CDC should be present and participate in as many fire service events, expos, meetings, and symposiums as possible to distribute information and seek the participation in the Registry. We strongly encourage the CDC to host public enrollment events with federal, state, and local stakeholders across the country to encourage participation in the Registry. While less effective, the CDC should consider a public relations strategy that involves advertising in professional periodicals and distributing materials in print and social media.

The CDC also should consider utilizing already established state and national cancer registries to enroll participants that have identified as a firefighter. While this method may be limited to recruit new participants, it could be useful to capture data of previously diagnosed cases of cancer in self-identified fire fighters.

The success of the Registry is of tremendous importance to us. We look forward to working with you to develop a robust Registry. We thank you for your work and efforts to improve the lives of our nations fire service.

Sincerely,



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress




Chris Collins
Member of Congress


Mark Amodei
Member of Congress



Cindy Axne
Member of Congress


Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress



Mike Bost
Member of Congress


Anthony Brindisi
Member of Congress



Susan Brooks
Member of Congress


Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress


Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress


Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress


Joe Courtney
Member of Congress


Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress


Val B. Demings
Member of Congress

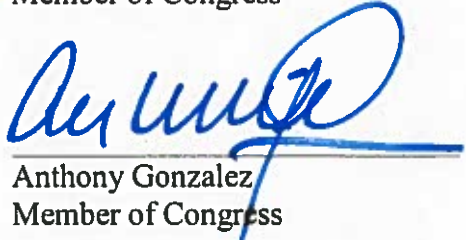

Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress


Brian K. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress


Bill Foster
Member of Congress


John Garamendi
Member of Congress

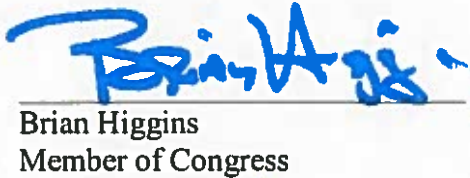

Jared Golden
Member of Congress

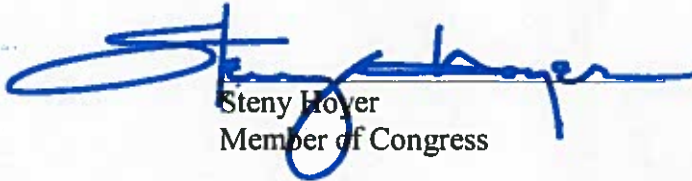

Anthony Gonzalez
Member of Congress


Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress


Raul Grijalva
Member of Congress


Deb Haaland
Member of Congress


Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

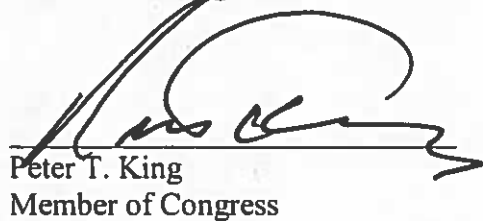

Steny Hoyer
Member of Congress


Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

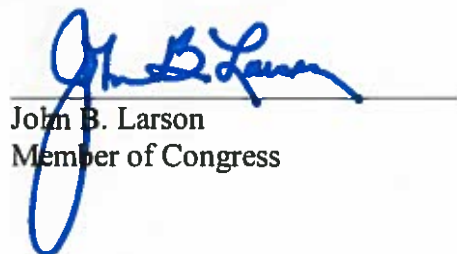

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

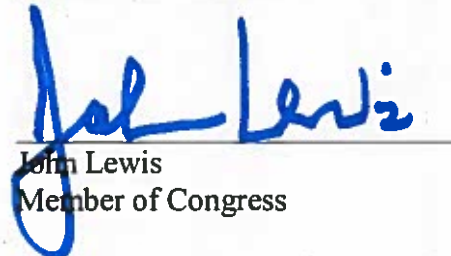

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress


Peter T. King
Member of Congress



Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress


John B. Larson
Member of Congress

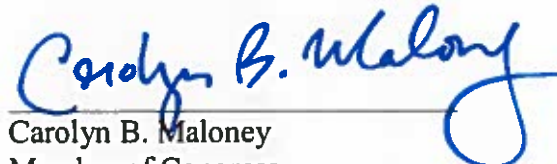

John Lewis
Member of Congress


Daniel W. Lipinski
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress


Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

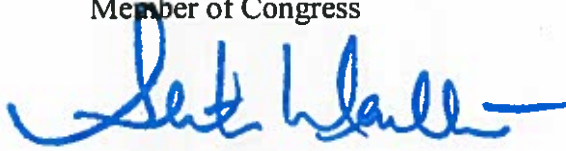

Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress


Brian Mast
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress


Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress


Seth Moulton
Member of Congress


Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress


Donald Norcross
Member of Congress


Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress


Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress


Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress



Scott Peters
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress



Max Rose
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



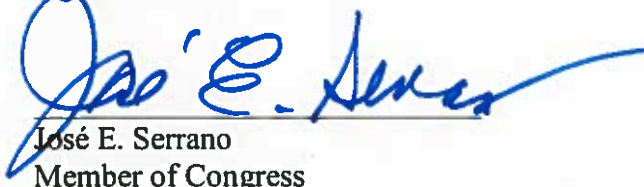
Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress



José E. Serrano
Member of Congress



Donna Shalala
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress



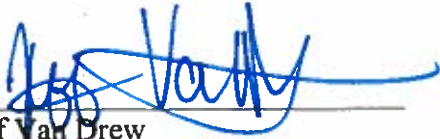
Thomas Suozzi
Member of Congress




Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



Jeff Van Drew
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Peter Visclosky
Member of Congress



Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Frederica Wilson
Member of Congress



John Yarmuth
Member of Congress