

AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 119-8
OFFERED BY MR. NEGUSE OF COLORADO

At the end of subtitle B of title XVII, add the following new section:

1 **SEC. 17__ . MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR FEDERAL**
2 **WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS.**

3 (a) MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM.—Not later than 1
4 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secre-
5 taries shall establish a program for mental health aware-
6 ness and support for Federal wildland firefighters, which
7 shall include the following:

8 (1) A mental health awareness campaign.

9 (2) A mental health education and training pro-
10 gram that includes an on-boarding curriculum for
11 Federal wildland firefighters.

12 (3) An extensive peer-to-peer mental health
13 support network for Federal wildland firefighters
14 and immediate family of such firefighters.

15 (4) Expansion of the Critical Incident Stress
16 Management Program of the National Interagency
17 Fire Center to ensure such program includes—

18 (A) procedures for development and reten-
19 tion of a larger pool of qualified mental health

1 professionals who are familiar with the experi-
2 ences of the emergency response workforce; and

3 (B) monitoring and tracking of mental
4 health in the wildland firefighter profession to
5 better understand the scope of the issues and
6 provide ongoing assistance and professional
7 long-term care to patients.

8 (5) Establishment of a distinct mental health
9 support service specific to Federal wildland fire-
10 fighters and immediate family of such firefighters—

11 (A) which shall be staffed by culturally rel-
12 evant and trauma informed mental health pro-
13 fessionals who are readily available to such fire-
14 fighters and family; and

15 (B) the sessions and services provided
16 under which shall not be subject to any limit on
17 the number available per client.

18 (b) MENTAL HEALTH LEAVE.—Each Federal
19 wildland firefighter shall be entitled to 7 days of leave,
20 any number of which may be taken consecutively, without
21 loss or reduction in pay, during any calendar year. Leave
22 provided under this paragraph shall not—

23 (1) accumulate for use in succeeding years; and

1 (2) be considered to be annual or vacation leave
2 for purposes of section 5551 or 5552 of title 5,
3 United States Code, or for any other purpose.

4 (c) PARTNERSHIPS AUTHORITY.—In carrying out
5 subsections (a) and (b), the Secretaries may enter into
6 partnerships or cooperative agreements with other Federal
7 agencies, universities, or non-profit institutions.

8 (d) OWCP.—The director of the Office of Workers'
9 Compensation Programs of the Department of Labor
10 shall—

11 (1) recognize post-traumatic stress disorder and
12 psychological stress-related injuries or illnesses cor-
13 related to fire protection, suppression, and incident
14 support activities, and ensure long-term coverage for
15 the duration of such disorder, injuries, or illnesses;
16 and

17 (2) expand the Special Claims Unit to ensure
18 unit staffing levels are adequate and sufficient to ex-
19 pedite the claims process, and shorten response
20 times, with respect to wildland firefighters and inci-
21 dent support personnel injured or effected on the job
22 so as to alleviate the psychological and financial bur-
23 dens placed on the such firefighters and personnel,
24 and families of such firefighters and personnel, as
25 patients.

1 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

2 (1) FEDERAL WILDLAND FIREFIGHTER.—The
3 term “Federal wildland firefighter” means any tem-
4 porary, seasonal, or permanent position at the De-
5 partment of Agriculture or the Department of the
6 Interior, and Tribal Firefighters, that maintains
7 group, emergency incident management, or fire
8 qualifications, as established annually by the Stand-
9 ards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications pub-
10 lished by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group,
11 and primarily engages in or supports wildland fire
12 management activities, including forestry and range-
13 land technicians and positions concerning aviation,
14 engineering heavy equipment operations, dispatch, or
15 fire and fuels management.

16 (2) SECRETARIES.—The term “Secretaries”
17 means the Secretary of Agriculture and the Sec-
18 retary of the Interior.

