

**AMENDMENT TO RULES COMMITTEE PRINT**

**119-33**

**OFFERED BY MR. NEGUSE OF COLORADO**

At the end of subtitle B of title XVII, insert 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 section, the Secre-  
5 taries shall jointly establish a program for mental health  
6 awareness and support for Federal wildland firefighters,  
7 which 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—

1 (A) procedures for development and reten-  
2 tion of a larger pool of qualified mental health  
3 professionals who are familiar with the experi-  
4 ences of the emergency response workforce; and

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

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

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

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

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

25 (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 affected 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) The term “Federal wildland firefighter”  
3 means—

4 (A) any—

5 (i) temporary, seasonal, or permanent  
6 position at the Department of Agriculture  
7 or the Department of the Interior; or

8 (ii) Tribal Firefighter;

9 (B) that—

10 (i) maintains group, emergency inci-  
11 dent management, or fire qualifications, as  
12 established in the most recent Standards  
13 for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications  
14 published by the National Wildfire Coordi-  
15 nating Group; and

16 (ii) primarily engages in or supports  
17 wildland fire management activities, in-  
18 cluding forestry and rangeland technicians  
19 and positions concerning aviation, engi-  
20 neering heavy equipment operations, dis-  
21 patch, or fire and fuels management.

22 (2) The term “Secretaries” means the Sec-  
23 retary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Inte-  
24 rior.

