

# **Illinois Fire Service Caucus**

## **Washington DC 2019**

### **Report**



**ILLINOIS**  
**FIRE**  
SERVICE  
INSTITUTE



**April 29 – May 3, 2019**

**By Ronald Kubicki - Legislative Liaison NIAFPD**

## **Illinois Fire Service Delegation**

**Ronald Kubicki** – Legislative Liaison Northern Illinois Alliance of Fire Protection Districts

**Nick Kosiara** – President Northern IL Alliance of Fire Protection Districts

**Matt Perez** – Illinois State Fire Marshall

**Mark Puknaitis** – President IL Fire Chiefs Association  
Chief Naperville Fire Department

**Colonel Royal Mortenson** – Executive Director IL Fire Service Institute

**Jim Keiken** – Assistant Director IL Fire Service Institute

**Marvin Hill** – Trustee Barrington Fire Protection District  
Board Member IL Association of Fire Protection Districts

**David Palya** – Trustee Lockport Fire Protection District

**Shawn Flaherty** – Attorney Ottosen, Britz, Kelly, Cooper, Gilbert & DiNolfo, Ltd.

## **CONGRESSIONAL FIRE SERVICES CAUCUS CO-CHAIRS**

### **Senate**

Senator Susan Collins (ME)

Senator Thomas Carper (DE)

Senator Lisa Murkowski (AK)

Senator Jon Tester (MT)

### **House**

Congressman Steny Hoyer (MD-5)

Congressman Peter King (NY-2)

Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr. (NJ-9)

Congressman Mike Bost (IL-12)



## **CONGRESSIONAL FIRE SERVICES CAUCUS HISTORY**

In 1987 the Congressional Fire Services Caucus was established to educate members of Congress about fire and emergency services. The Caucus was created to be a bipartisan group where Republicans and Democrats could work together to improve the readiness of local first responders and to jointly recognize their valor and dedication. To preserve the bipartisan spirit of the Caucus, the chairmanship rotates every two years between Republican and Democratic members. Previous chairmen include Senators John McCain (AZ), Paul Sarbanes (MD), William V. Roth, Jr. (DE), Joseph Biden (DE), Congressmen Curt Weldon (PA), Steny Hoyer (MD), Sherwood Boehlert (NY), Robert Andrews (NJ), David Reichert (WA), Peter King (NY) and Bill Pascrell, Jr. (NJ).

Today the Fire Caucus is one of the largest caucuses in Congress. The Caucus is not about ideology, but rather respect and support for our nation's first responders. The Congressional Fire Services Caucus unites all members of Congress in support of fire service legislation that benefits all of our nation's fire and emergency services. Acting in a bipartisan manner, the Caucus is dedicated to addressing the needs and challenges of our nation's fire and emergency services. The Caucus serves as a forum for education and discussion on a broad range of issues that impact the readiness and response capabilities of our nation's first responders to all forms of hazards.

Members of Congress can build upon their relationships with local fire service leaders by joining the Fire Caucus. In many instances, members of the fire service are the pillars of a community. They attend the Rotary and Chamber meetings. They organize the blood drives and the Fourth of July picnics. In many smaller communities, the volunteer firefighters are also prominent business leaders. Most importantly, firefighters are among the first on the scene when a disaster strikes.

Joining the Congressional Fire Services Caucus is a win-win proposition for the members of Congress and for the local fire departments. By joining, members are not expected to support an agenda, but rather a cause.



### **IL Fire Service meeting with IL Senator Richard Durbin**

**Left to right: Jim Keiken, Dave Palya, Ronald Kubicki, Shawn Flaherty, Chief Puknaitis, Colonel Mortenson, Senator Durbin, Nick Kosiara, Marvin Hill, and State Fire Marshall Matt Perez**

Senator Durbin and Senator Duckworth are putting together a bill that would appropriate 250 million dollars to help fund the building or refurbishing of fire station throughout the nation. This could be a great help to some of our down state departments and districts.

The Congressional Fire Service Institute (CFSI) held its 31<sup>th</sup> Annual Fire Service Caucus in Washington DC on April 18, 19 and 20, 2019. As in the past fire personal from across the United States converged on our Nation's Capital. Due to a scheduling mistake the Congress was on recess at that time. So, the Illinois Fire Service Delegation chose to converge on Washington two weeks later so we could be sure we would be able to meet with our Congressman and Congresswoman to present our views and suggestions. IL was well represented again this year. We only had 9 members attending due to the change in the schedule but what a great showing. I am so proud of each one of these great people. Our very first meeting was on Tuesday the 29<sup>th</sup> review and plan out our schedule for the next two days. I am very proud to report to you that we were able to meet with 11 of our IL Congressmen and Congresswomen. In some cases, we had to meet with their staffs.

**Here is a list of those legislators we met with in person:**

Senator Richard Durbin

Congressman Daniel Lipinski D-3<sup>rd</sup>

Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky D-9<sup>th</sup>

Congressman Bill Foster D-11<sup>th</sup>

Congressman Brad Schneider D-10<sup>th</sup>

Congressman Mike Bost R-12<sup>th</sup>

**We also met with the staffs of:**

Senator Tammy Duckworth

Congresswoman Robin Kelly D-2<sup>nd</sup>

Congresswoman Cheri Bustos D-17<sup>th</sup>

Congressman Mike Quigley D-5<sup>th</sup>

Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi D-8<sup>th</sup>

The focus of this year's meetings was to thank our congressmen and congresswomen for their support of the (AFG) Assistance to Firefighters and (SAFER) Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grants. AFG and SAFER grants have helped many IL Fire Protection Districts and Fire Departments throughout our state to be able to hire new firefighters and to also have the funds to purchase new gear and equipment to better serve their departments.

We also thanked them for their great support in passing the Firefighter Cancer Registry Act. This legislation creates a specialized national registry to provide researchers and epidemiologists with the tools and resources they need to improve research collection activities related to the monitoring of cancer incidence among firefighters. We feel this will help save firefighters lives in the future.

We finished up each of our meetings with Colonel Royal Mortenson the Executive Director of the IL Fire Service Institute at the University of Illinois in Champaign. The Colonel presented an update on the Institutes program to seek federal dollars over the next few years to help build a new training facility about 2 miles south of the fire service institute. This project is estimated to cost around 75 million dollars and should be in place by 2025. The goal for the institute is to



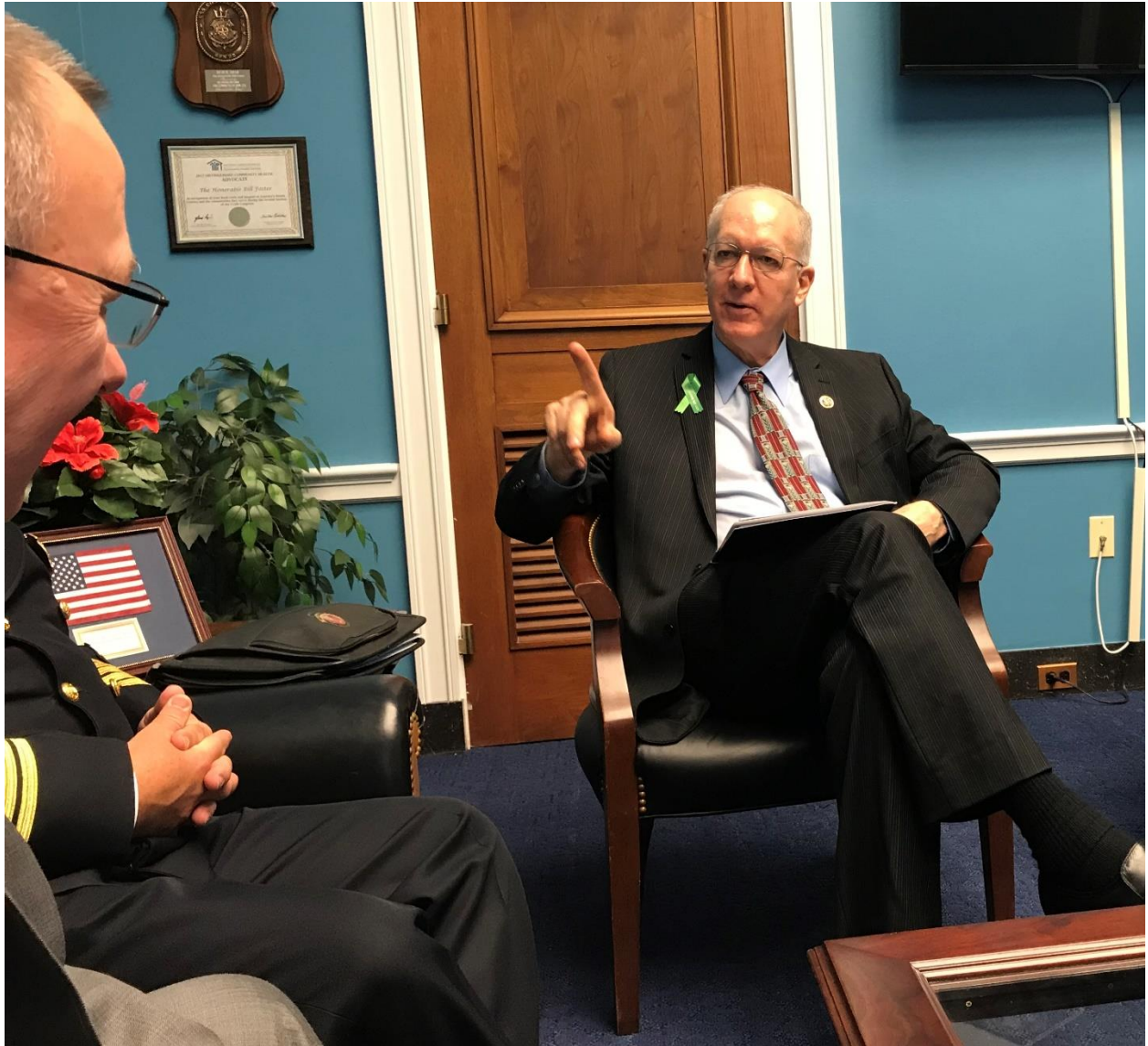
seek federal funds along with corporate sponsorship so they will be able to build this very important addition to the institute.

As many of you know the IL Fire Service Institute is the oldest fire institute in the country, they trained over 65,000 firefighter and fire personnel in 2018 from 100 of the 102 counties in Illinois. They also trained firefighters from 38 other states along with 7 other countries. The IL Fire Service Institute is recognized as one of the best fire training facilities in the United States. It provides a major economic impact for the city of Champaign and to the State of Illinois.



IL Fire Service Meeting with Congressman Bill Foster

**Left to right: Shawn Flaherty, Jim Keiken, Ron Kubicki, Congressman Foster, Chief Mark Puknaitis and Dave Palya**



### **Congressman Foster asking questions of the IL Fire Service Delegation**

Our meeting with Congressman Foster was so inspiring, that he met with us for almost 45 minutes and he had a lot of questions for us. If it weren't for his staff making him wrap it up, we still might be there. Thank You Congressman Foster for taking the time to meet with us.





### **Meeting with Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky**

**From left to right: Nick Kosiara, Jim Keiken, Ronald Kubicki, Chief Puknaitis, Congresswoman Schakowsky, Marvin Hill, Colonel Mortenson, Shawn Flaherty, Fire Marshall Perez & Dave Palya**

Congresswoman Schakowsky was very happy to meet with us that she stepped out of another committee meeting to come up to her office and meet with us. She is a great support of the IL Fire Service.





### **Meeting with Congressman Dan Lipinski D-3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Left to right: Dave Palya, Marvin Hill, Shawn Flaherty, Colonel Mortenson, Fire Marshall Perez, Ronald Kubicki, Congressman Lipinski, Chief Puknaitis, Nick Kosiara, & Jim Keiken**

Congressman Lipinski is the Chairman of the Sub Committee on Transportation which covers Rail Roads, Pipelines and Haz Mat. His district is from the southwest side of Chicago and the suburbs around Midway. Congressman Lipinski has worked with on many issues in the past.



### **Congressman Mike Bost R-12<sup>th</sup>**

**Left to right: Jim Keiken, Colonel Mortenson, Shawn Flaherty, Fire Marshall Perez, Congressman Bost, Ronald Kubicki, Chief Puknaitis, Marvin Hill, Nick Kosiara, & Dave Palya**

Congressman Bost is now a Co-Chair from the House side of the Congressional Fire Caucus. This is great news for all of us back here in Illinois. Congressman Bost is the only member of Congress that is a full-time firefighter. He serves the 12<sup>th</sup> district near St Louis and the entire State of Illinois very well. Congressman Bost is a huge support of the Fire Service in Illinois.

In closing, I need to give a special thanks to Chief Mark Puknaitis, Colonel Royal Mortenson, for doing a great job as our speakers at each one of our congressional meeting. These two were very professional and made all of us from Illinois very proud. They were able to present our issues in a timely manner that allowed the Senator or Congressman or their staffs to be able to ask questions of the delegation. A very special thank you to our great State Fire Marshall Matt Perez for taking the time out of his busy schedule to attend this year he added so much to the delegation. I would also like to thank the Northern Illinois Alliance of Fire Protection Districts, The Illinois Fire Chiefs Association and The Illinois Association of Fire Protection Districts, The Office of the State Fire Marshall and the IL Fire Service Institute for all their support over the years. All these associations have been the leaders in presenting our states issues to congress.

For over 30 years, the fire service in Illinois has been sending it's very best to Washington DC to help promote our State and the Fire Service in Illinois. I just want to say thank you to all of you that have taken the time out your busy schedules to support this fire caucus.

If you think or if you know anyone that might be interested in representing the Illinois Fire Service next year at CFSI Please contact me. I have listed the date below:

**Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI) will be held on:**

**Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday April 28, 29 & 30, 2020**

**Washington DC**

**Hope to See You There**



**Congressman Dan Lipinski and Ronald Kubicki**

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