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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To establish a mental health program for Federal wildland firefighter, and
for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. NEGUSE introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

A BILL

To establish a mental health program for Federal wildland
firefighter, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Care for our Fire-
5 fighters Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM FOR FEDERAL**
7 **WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS.**

8 (a) MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM.—Subject to the
9 availability of appropriations, not later than 180 days

1 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretaries
2 of the Interior and Agriculture shall establish and carry
3 out a program for Federal wildland firefighters for mental
4 health awareness and support. Such program shall in-
5 clude—

6 (1) a mental health awareness campaign;

7 (2) a mental health education and training pro-
8 gram that includes an on-boarding curriculum;

9 (3) an extensive peer-to-peer mental health sup-
10 port network for Federal wildland firefighters and
11 their immediate family;

12 (4) expanding the Critical Incident Stress Man-
13 agement Program through training, developing, and
14 retaining a larger pool of qualified mental health
15 professionals who are familiar with the experiences
16 of the wildland firefighting workforce, and moni-
17 toring and tracking mental health in the profession
18 to better understand the scope of the issue and de-
19 velop strategies to assist; and

20 (5) establish and carry out a new and distinct
21 mental health support service specific to Federal
22 wildland firefighters and their immediate family,
23 with culturally relevant and trauma-informed mental
24 health professionals who are readily available and

1 not subject to any limit on the number of sessions
2 or service provided.

3 (b) MENTAL HEALTH LEAVE.—Each Federal
4 wildland firefighter shall be entitled to 7 consecutive days
5 of leave, without loss or reduction in pay, during each cal-
6 endar year for the purposes of maintaining mental health.
7 Such leave may only be taken during the period beginning
8 on June 1 and ending on October 31 of any such year.
9 If leave is not taken under this section it expires after
10 October 31 of the calendar year.

11 (c) FEDERAL WILDLAND FIREFIGHTER DEFINED.—
12 In this Act, the term “Federal wildland firefighter” means
13 any temporary, seasonal, or permanent position at the De-
14 partment of Agriculture or the Department of Interior
15 that maintains group, emergency incident management, or
16 fire qualifications and primarily engages in or supports
17 wildland fire management activities, including forestry
18 and rangeland technicians and positions concerning avia-
19 tion, fire heavy equipment operations, emergency dispatch
20 communication services, or fire and fuels management.