

2019 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 58

BY REPRESENTATIVE JIMMY HARRIS

A RESOLUTION

To commend the International Association of Fire Fighters for more than one hundred years of service.

WHEREAS, the International Association of Fire Fighters, or IAFF, was founded in Washington, D.C., on February 26, 1918, when thirty-six delegates representing twenty-four local organizations met at its first convention; and

WHEREAS, the IAFF was organized to meet the needs of the emerging professional firefighter; and

WHEREAS, at the moment of the IAFF's inception, fire protection services were haphazard and firefighters were often endangered by the lack of safety equipment and operational standards and usually received little or no compensation; and

WHEREAS, before the organization existed, a firefighter would often work twenty-four hour shifts in which he was expected to be on continuous duty and would receive very low wages for his services; and

WHEREAS, as a corrective to this state of affairs, the IAFF helped to improve working conditions for firefighters and assisted in the process by which firefighters received substantial benefits and better wages; and

WHEREAS, the IAFF created the Fire Fighters Fund to provide financial assistance to the children of fallen firefighters; and

WHEREAS, during the Great Depression of the 1930s, fire fighting became a more dependable form of employment, and the profession benefitted from improvements in safety technology, including two-way radio communications, breathing equipment, and lifesaving devices; and

WHEREAS, in 1934, the IAFF was recognized by the National Fire Protection Association, the United States Department of Agriculture, and other national organizations for its crucial role in the reduction of fire hazards, in the education of the public, and in fire safety research; and

WHEREAS, when the United States entered into World War II, IAFF firefighters answered the call to military service in all branches of the armed forces; and

WHEREAS, in the December 1941 issue of *Fire Fighter* magazine, the IAFF declared to its members that "The firefighters of the Nation, in particular, have a distinct service to perform. Already well-organized, trained, and accustomed to discipline and the orderly performance of their duties under any and all conditions, and with complete disregard of any personal danger, firefighters may be expected to set an example for their fellow citizens in the trying days that lie ahead"; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, the IAFF assisted in the coordination of its members to ensure that firefighters were available to serve both at home and in combat, and when firefighters returned home after their tours of duty, the IAFF worked to ensure that able-bodied members would return to their firehouses to continue their employment and that disabled firefighters would find positions in the fire service; and

WHEREAS, as Emergency Medical Services, or EMS, developed in the 1960s, the IAFF supported the partnership between the EMS and fire protection; and

WHEREAS, today, the Fire & EMS Operations/GIS Department of the IAFF provides comprehensive information on fire departments and fire-based EMS and promotes staffing and deployment for fire suppression and fire-based EMS; and

WHEREAS, after the 9/11 tragedy at the New York Trade Center, the IAFF stepped in to provide logistical support at Ground Zero, and sent stress management teams to aid overwhelmed firefighters and grieving families, in addition to distributing \$96 million to family members of fallen firefighters in 2002; and

WHEREAS, after 9/11, the leadership of the IAFF participated in the creation of the United States Department of Homeland Security to ensure that fire protection was a priority of the agency; and

WHEREAS, the firefighters of the IAFF are always included in the front lines of the response to any national emergency, whether it be hurricanes or other natural disasters or

manmade ones, and they contribute time and resources to international relief efforts that better the lives of children and families; and

WHEREAS, as the primary advocate for firefighters and paramedics, the IAFF insists that fire personnel be properly equipped to effectively perform their duties, which include ensuring the safety and protection of the nation's citizens; and

WHEREAS, the IAFF has been the leader in the advancement of fire safety services throughout the nation, and it has led the way in the attempt to improve the working conditions and compensation of those who step in harm's way to provide fire protection and EMS to the community.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend the International Association of Fire Fighters for more than one hundred years of service and does hereby congratulate the brave men and women of the firefighting profession for their manifold contributions to the state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Harold A. Schaitberger, IAFF General President; Edward Kelly, IAFF General Secretary-Treasurer; Danny Todd, IAFF Fourteenth District Vice President; and Chad Major, Louisiana President of the IAFF.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES