

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 197

BY SENATOR WARD

A RESOLUTION

To commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the International Association of Fire Fighters and to note the many contributions made to fire safety by the association.

WHEREAS, the International Association of Fire Fighters (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 fire fighter; at that time, fire protection services were haphazard and fire fighters were often endangered by the lack of safety equipment and operational standards, and with little or no compensation; and

WHEREAS, before the organization existed, a fire fighter would work a shift that consisted of twenty-four hours per day on continuous duty for lengthy periods of time at very low wages; and

WHEREAS, the IAFF progressed and established improved working conditions, substantial benefits, and better wages; and

WHEREAS, the Fire Fighters Fund was created to provide benevolent contributions to the children of fallen fire fighters; and

WHEREAS, during the Great Depression of the 1930s, fire fighting became a more dependable form of employment; 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 fire fighters

answered the call to military service in all branches of the armed forces and were uniquely trained to do so; and

WHEREAS, in the December 1941 issue of Fire Fighter Magazine, the IAFF declared to its members, *"The fire fighters 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, fire fighters may be expected to set an example for their fellow citizens in the trying days that lay ahead."*; and

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

WHEREAS, as Emergency Medical Services developed in the 1960s, emergency healthcare services partnered with fire protection with the full support of the IAFF; today the Fire and EMS Operations/GIS Department of the IAFF provides comprehensive information on fire departments and fire-based EMS and promotes appropriate staffing and deployment for fire suppression and effective fire-based emergency medical service systems; and

WHEREAS, after the 9/11 tragedy at the New York Trade Center, IAFF stepped in to provide logistical support at Ground Zero; the association sent stress management teams to aid overwhelmed fire fighters and grieving families; and IAFF distributed \$96 million to family members of fallen fire 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 served a prominent role within the agency; and

WHEREAS, the fire fighters of the IAFF are always included on the front lines to respond to any national emergency, whether hurricanes or other natural or manmade disasters; they contribute time and resources to international relief efforts that better the lives of children and families; and

WHEREAS, as the primary advocate for fire fighters and paramedics, the IAFF insists that fire personnel be properly equipped to effectively preform their duties which include the safety and protection of eighty-five percent of the population of North America; and

WHEREAS, the IAFF has been the leader in the advancement of fire safety services throughout the nation and it has been a supporter of increased benefits for those who step in harm's way to provide fire protection and emergency medical services to the community.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the International Association of Fire Fighters and does hereby note the many contributions to fire safety made by the IAFF.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby congratulate the brave men and women in the fire fighting profession.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a 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 International Association of Fire Fighters.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE