



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

HAROLD A. SCHAITBERGER
General President

June 19, 2009

Robert Wing, President
Kansas State Council of Fire Fighters
P.O. Box 6243
Kansas City, KS 66106-0243

Dear President Wing,

As you know, I am unable to attend the Kansas State Council of Fire Fighters Convention. I will be at the IAFF Executive Board Meeting while you convene in Wichita.

But I want to congratulate you on your work in Kansas. Your efforts to organize first responders in the state are very impressive. Adding fire fighters from Forbes Field in Topeka, Sedgwick County paramedics, Dickinson County paramedics and Lawrence County dispatchers to your state association makes them stronger and the Kansas State Council of Fire Fighters stronger.

I also want to congratulate you for your long-time support of former Governor Kathleen Sebelius. She has been a friend of Kansas fire fighters for more than 20 years, and I know you were just as gratified as I was when she was confirmed as secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

I know you plan to continue working hard to fulfill your legislative goals, and I want to wish you luck as you pursue a permanent cost-of-living adjustment for your retired members.

In Washington, the historic election of President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden puts us in position to improve the lives and livelihoods of our members. We will identify and prioritize the legislation we need to get introduced in Congress, but I fully expect great things for our members out of the 111th Congress and our new president.

After decades of work, our tireless political action program has us poised to pass our single-most important legislative initiative in more than 50 years – collective bargaining rights for all of our members. In the last Congress, the proposal passed the House of Representatives by an overwhelming margin of 314-97, with a majority of Democrats and Republicans supporting the measure. In the Senate, a procedural vote to bring up the legislation passed 69-29 – an unheard of margin for a labor bill. With a new president, we are hopeful that this vital proposal becomes law.

We have a number of tough challenges ahead. Virtually every IAFF affiliate is affected by the downturn in our nation's economy. Many are experiencing downward pressure on local budgets as the cost of running governments continues to rise while tax revenues decline. We are meeting this challenge head on and assisting our affiliates any way we can.

The stimulus signed by President Obama on February 17 will provide billions of dollars for local governments and millions for construction of fire service infrastructure. We lobbied hard and got \$8.8 billion included in the stimulus package to help local governments fund public safety. We also sought and won \$210 million in new funding for fire service infrastructure.

Robert Wing, President
Kansas State Council of Fire Fighters
June 19, 2009
Page 2

We have fulfilled two more important goals.

During his presidential campaign, Barack Obama promised me that, if elected, he would fund the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program at substantially higher levels than have been authorized in the past. He has fulfilled that campaign promise in his first formal budget request by doubling what the program received last year with \$420 million for SAFER for Fiscal Year 2010.

We also have succeeded in getting the rules changed for SAFER grants so those funds can be used to rehire fire fighters who have been laid off and prevent reductions in force.

We have also developed a comprehensive online resource to arm IAFF affiliates with information, tools, databases and other means to quickly access the IAFF's vast programs and expertise to help you deal with the challenges you continue to face. Because you face new health risks due to the emergence of swine flu, we have also compiled resources to help our members protect themselves from pandemic flu. And we will continue to help you and all affiliates from baseless attacks like the one launched by the National League of Cities, whose erroneous report falsely claims there is no connection between cancer and fire fighting.

All these resources are available on www.IAFF.org

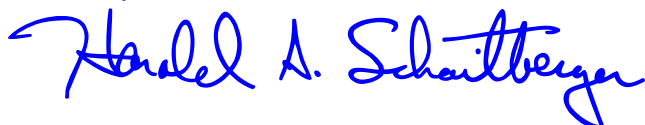
It is my personal goal to ensure that the International meets the needs of all its affiliates across North America at every level. I'm proud of the range of services we offer affiliates in such critical areas as collective bargaining, health and safety, public relations, labor relations and technical assistance.

We have built an incredible team at the IAFF, along with your General Secretary-Treasurer Vincent J. Bollon and 16 District Vice Presidents, all of whom do a great job representing the interests of members in their districts. I certainly want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to IAFF 2nd District Vice President Mark Woolbright and recognize his extraordinary efforts to service your district. As my friend and someone I rely on for advice and counsel, Mark has always been very focused on the issues in Kansas and is committed to your state association.

The full spectrum of IAFF services is available to all of our members in Kansas, as they are to all of our 295,000 members across North America.

I am grateful to all of the members of the Kansas State Council of Fire Fighters for your unwavering support of the IAFF and our important mission and goals. We face many challenges as a union, but none that are insurmountable because we are united in our work to improve the lives and livelihoods of our members across North America.

Fraternally,



Harold A. Schaitberger
General President

cc: Mark Woolbright, IAFF 2nd District Vice President