

Calendar No. 108

116TH CONGRESS }
1st Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT
116-43

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE
DESIGNATION OF OCTOBER 28, 2019, AS
“HONORING THE NATION’S FIRST
RESPONDERS DAY”

R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

TO ACCOMPANY

S. CON. RES. 15



JUNE 4, 2019.—Ordered to be printed

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Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. Con. Res. 15]

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, to which was referred the concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 15) expressing support for the designation of October 28, 2019, as “Honoring the Nation’s First Responders Day”, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the concurrent resolution do pass.

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I. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

S. Con. Res. 15 expresses support for the designation of October 28, 2019, as “Honoring the Nation’s First Responders Day.” First responders deserve to be recognized for their commitment to safety, defense, and honor. First responders include all professional and volunteer fire, police, emergency medical technician, and paramedic workers in the United States.

II. BACKGROUND AND THE NEED FOR LEGISLATION

There are an estimated 4.6 million first responders, comprised of career and volunteer professionals, in the United States.¹ First responders often serve as “the primary line of defense for U.S. communities, responding to an evolving spectrum of natural and man-made threats,” putting themselves at risk to protect or aide others.² They serve in critical roles across the country, with daily responsibilities that often involve “managing crisis situations or working in dangerous or unstable environments.”³ Consequently, work-related incidents that cause injury or illness occur at much higher rates for first responders, in comparison to workers in most other occupations.⁴

This Committee has a history of working together to support first responders in various capacities. In 2017, for example, the Committee held a hearing regarding the Federal Government’s response to the 2017 hurricane season.⁵ During the hearing, the Committee recognized the contributions of first responders who worked for weeks on end to “help alleviate the suffering and begin the monumental task of rebuilding.”⁶ In 2014, for example, the Committee held a hearing entitled, *Transparency and Training: Preparing our First Responders for Emerging Threats and Hazards*, to discuss challenges facing first responders from the transportation of hazardous material, and various ways to support first responders.⁷ In that same year, the Committee held a hearing to evaluate the role and coordination of first responders in catastrophic disaster planning.⁸ Additionally, last Congress the Committee approved and the President enacted legislation to reauthorize federal grants that help local fire departments comply with staffing, response, and operational standards.⁹

The Committee is honored to support this legislation to ensure that first responders are recognized for their contributions to communities across the United States.

¹ *Emergency Services Sector Profile*, Dep’t of Homeland Sec. (Nov. 2018), available at https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/18_0126_NPPD_emergency-services-sector-profile.pdf.

² *First Responders*, Dep’t of Homeland Sec., available at <https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/first-responders> (last visited May 20, 2019).

³ Kristina Shafer et al., *Characteristics of Individuals and Employment Among First Responders*, Dep’t of Labor (2015), available at <https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/analytics-reports/CharacteristicsOfIndividualsAndEmploymentAmongFirstResponders.pdf>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *2017 Hurricane Season: Oversight of the Federal Response: Hearing Before the S. Comm. on Homeland Sec. & Governmental Affairs*, 115th Cong. (2017) (opening statement for Sen. Ron Johnson, Chairman), available at <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/hearings/2017-hurricane-season-oversight-of-the-federal-response>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Transparency and Training: Preparing Our First Responders for Emerging Threats and Hazards: Hearing Before the S. Comm. on Homeland Sec. & Governmental Affairs, Subcomm. on Emergency Mgmt., Intergovernmental Rel., and the District of Columbia*, 113th Cong. (2014), available at <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/subcommittees/emdc/hearings/transparency-and-training-preparing-our-first-responders-for-emerging-threats-and-hazards>.

⁸ *Fifty Years Since the Great Alaska Earthquake: The Role of First Responders in Catastrophic Disaster Planning: Hearing Before the S. Comm. on Homeland Sec. & Governmental Affairs, Subcomm. on Emergency Mgmt., Intergovernmental Rel., and the District of Columbia*, 113th Cong. (2014), available at <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/subcommittees/emdc/hearings/fifty-years-since-the-great-alaska-earthquake-the-role-of-first-responders-in-catastrophic-disaster-planning>.

⁹ United States Fire Administration, AFG, and SAFER Program Reauthorization Act of 2017, Pub. L. No. 115–98 (115th Cong.) (passed the Committee as S. 829).

III. LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Senator Elizabeth Warren (D–MA) introduced S. Con. Res. 15 on May 1, 2019, with Senators Tom Cotton (R–AR), Ron Johnson (R–WI), James Lankford (R–OK), Gary Peters (D–MI), and Jacky Rosen (D–NV). The concurrent resolution was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs on May 1, 2019.

The Committee considered S. Con. Res. 15 at a business meeting on May 15, 2019. The concurrent resolution was ordered reported favorably *en bloc* by voice vote. Senators Johnson, Paul, Lankford, Scott, Peters, Carper, Hassan, and Rosen were present for the vote. For the record only, Senators Portman, Romney, Hawley, and Sinema later asked to be recorded as “yes” by unanimous consent.

IV. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF THE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, AS REPORTED

The resolution makes findings about first responders’ work within a variety of disciplinary areas, the size of the first responder community, and need to recognize their service. The resolution designates October 28, 2019, as “Honoring the Nation’s First Responders Day.” The concurrent resolution urges Americans to engage in appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote appreciation of the sacrifices and work of first responders on October 28, 2019.

V. EVALUATION OF REGULATORY IMPACT

Pursuant to the requirements of paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee has considered the regulatory impact of this concurrent resolution and determined that the concurrent resolution will have no regulatory impact within the meaning of the rules. The Committee agrees with the Congressional Budget Office’s statement that the concurrent resolution contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

VI. CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

As this is a concurrent resolution, there is no Congressional Budget Office cost estimate.

VII. CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, AS REPORTED

Because this legislation would not repeal or amend any provision of current law, it would not make changes in existing law within the meaning of clauses (a) and (b) of paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate.