118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. ______

To reform and enhance the pay and benefits of Federal wildland firefighters,
and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BENNET introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred
to the Committee on __________________

A BILL

To reform and enhance the pay and benefits of Federal wildland firefighters, and for other purposes.

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; DEFINITIONS.

(a) Short Title.—This Act may be cited as the “Tim Hart Wildland Firefighter Classification and Pay Parity Act” or “Tim’s Act”.

(b) Definitions.—In this Act:

(1) Director.—The term “Director” means the Director of the Office of Personnel Management.
(2) **Federal Wildland Firefighter.**—The term “Federal wildland firefighter” means any temporary, seasonal, or permanent position at the Department of Agriculture or the Department of the Interior, and Tribal Firefighters, that maintains group, emergency incident management, or fire qualifications, as established annually by the Standards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications published by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group, and primarily engages in or supports wildland fire management activities, including forestry and rangeland technicians and positions concerning aviation, engineering heavy equipment operations, dispatch, or fire and fuels management.

(3) **Secretaries.**—The term “Secretaries” means the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior.

**SEC. 2. SPECIAL BASE PAY RATES FOR WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS.**

(a) In General.—Title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 5332 the following:

“§ 5332a. Special base rates of pay for wildland firefighters

“(a) In this section—
“(1) the term ‘firefighter’ means an employee who—

“(A) is a firefighter within the meaning of section 8331(21) or section 8401(14);

“(B) in the case of an employee who holds a supervisory or administrative position and is subject to subchapter III of chapter 83, but who does not qualify to be considered a firefighter within the meaning of section 8331(21), would otherwise qualify if the employee had transferred directly to such position after serving as a firefighter within the meaning of that section;

“(C) in the case of an employee who holds a supervisory or administrative position and is subject to chapter 84, but who does not qualify to be considered a firefighter within the meaning of section 8401(14), would otherwise qualify if the employee had transferred directly to such position after performing duties described in section 8401(14)(A) for at least 3 years; and

“(D) in the case of an employee who is not subject to subchapter III of chapter 83 or chapter 84, holds a position that the Office of Personnel Management determines would satisfy
subparagraph (A), (B), or (C) if the employee
were subject to subchapter III of chapter 83 or
chapter 84;
“(2) the term ‘General Schedule base rate’
means an annual rate of basic pay established under
section 5332, before any additions such as a locality-
based comparability payment under section 5304 or
5304a or a special rate supplement under section
5305;
“(3) the term ‘special base rate’ means an an-
nual rate of basic pay payable to a wildland fire-
fighter, before any additions or reductions, that re-
places the General Schedule base rate otherwise ap-
pllicable to the wildland firefighter and that is ad-
ministered in the same manner as General Schedule
base rates; and
“(4) the term ‘wildland firefighter’ means any
temporary, seasonal, or permanent position at the
Department of Agriculture or the Department of the
Interior, or Tribal Firefighters, that maintains
group, emergency incident management, or fire
qualifications, as established annually by the Stand-
ards for Wildland Fire Position Qualifications pub-
lished by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group,
and primarily engages in or supports wildland fire
management activities, including forestry and range-
land technicians and positions concerning aviation, 
engineering heavy equipment operations, dispatch, 
training, development and technology, or fire and 
fuels management.

“(b)(1) Notwithstanding section 5332, a wildland 
firefighter is entitled to a special base rate of pay at 
grades 1 through 15 of the General Schedule, as pre-
scribed by this subsection. This special base rate shall re-
place the otherwise applicable General Schedule base rate 
and shall be basic pay for all purposes, including the pur-
pose of computing a locality-based comparability payment 
under section 5304 or 5304a. Such special base rates shall 
be computed as described in paragraphs (2) and (3) and 
adjusted at the time of adjustments in the General Sched-
ule.

“(2) The minimum rate of basic pay for any wildland 
firefighter in levels 1 through 5 of the General Schedule 
shall—

“(A) be not less than the rate of pay for step 
3 of GS–6, as adjusted by the pay locality des-
ignated as ‘Rest of U.S.’ under section 5304; and

“(B) not be greater than the minimum rate of 
basic pay provided to GS–6 under paragraph (3).
“(3) The special base rates for a wildland firefighter in levels 6 through 15 of the General Schedule shall be derived by increasing the otherwise applicable General Schedule base rate on the date of enactment of this Act by the applicable percentage for the wildland firefighter’s grade as shown below and rounding the result to the nearest whole dollar:

```
"GS–6, 27 percent.
"GS–7, 24 percent.
"GS–8, 21 percent.
"GS–9, 18 percent.
"GS–10, 15 percent.
"GS–11, 12 percent.
"GS–12, 9 percent.
"GS–13, 6 percent.
"GS–14, 3 percent.
"GS–15, 1.5 percent.
```

“(4) When the special base rate is expressed as an hourly, daily, weekly, or biweekly rate, the rate is computed from the appropriate annual rate of basic pay derived under paragraph (2) or (3) in accordance with the rules prescribed by section 5504(b).”.

(b) **Effective Date.**—The amendments made by subsections (a) and (d) shall be effective on the first day
of the first applicable pay period beginning on or after October 1, 2023.

(c) **Clerical Amendment.**—The table of sections for chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 5332 the following:

“5332a. Special base rates of pay for wildland firefighters.”.

(d) **Prevailing Rate Employees.**—Section 5343 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(g) For prevailing rate employees described in section 5342(a)(2)(A) who qualify as a ‘wildland firefighter’ based on the definitions of ‘firefighter’ and ‘wildland firefighter’ in section 5332a(a), the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary of the Interior (as applicable) shall increase the wage rates of such employees by amounts (determined at the sole and exclusive discretion of the applicable Secretary after consultation with the other Secretary) that are generally consistent with the percentage increases given to wildland firefighters in the General Schedule under section 5332a. Such an increased wage rate shall be basic pay for the same purposes as the wage rate otherwise established under this section. An increase under this subsection may not cause an employee’s wage rate to increase beyond a rate that would produce an
annualized rate in excess of the annual rate for level IV of the Executive Schedule.”.

SEC. 3. WILDLAND FIRE INCIDENT STANDBY PREMIUM PAY.
(a) In General.—Title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 5545b the following:

“§5545c. Incident standby premium pay for employees engaged in wildland firefighting

“(a) In this section—

“(1) the term ‘covered employee’ means an employee of the Forest Service or the Department of the Interior who—

“(A) qualifies as a wildland firefighter based on the definitions of ‘firefighter’ and ‘wildland firefighter’ in section 5332a(a); or

“(B) is certified by the applicable agency to perform wildland fire incident related duties during the period such employee is assigned to a qualifying incident;

“(2) the term ‘designated sleep and rest period’ means the hours during an incident deployment that a covered employee is deemed to be in sleep or rest status for pay computation purposes, regardless of actual hours spent in that status;
“(3) the term ‘incident standby premium pay’ means pay to which a covered employee is entitled under subsection (c);

“(4) the term ‘prescribed fire incident’ means a wildland fire originating from a planned ignition in accordance with applicable laws, policies, and regulations to meet specific objectives;

“(5) the term ‘qualifying incident’ means a wildfire incident, a prescribed fire incident, or a severity incident, but excludes an initial response incident involving a single operational period of less than 36 hours (unless a longer period is approved by an authorized agency official due to exceptional circumstances) if the employee is in continual work status with no designated sleep and rest period established by the agency;

“(6) the term ‘severity incident’ means an incident in which a covered employee is pre-positioned in an area where conditions indicate there is a high risk of wildfires; and

“(7) the term ‘wildfire incident’ means a wildland fire originating from an unplanned ignition, such as lightning, volcanos, unauthorized and accidental human-caused fires, and prescribed fires that are declared wildfires.
“(b) A covered employee is eligible for incident standby premium pay under this section when meeting all of the following conditions:

“(1) The employee is deployed to the field by the employing agency to respond to a qualifying incident.

“(2) The employee is placed by the employing agency in continuous duty status during the incident deployment.

“(3) Any periods of sleeping and resting occur in a field location associated with the duty assignment.

“(c) A covered employee who meets the conditions in subsection (b) is entitled to incident standby premium pay for designated sleep and rest periods, and such pay shall be the only compensation payable to the employee for those periods, notwithstanding any other law. Such premium pay shall be paid at an hourly rate equal to 50 percent of the employee’s hourly rate of basic pay, rounded to the nearest whole cent. In determining an employee’s minimum wage and overtime pay entitlements under the Fair Labor Standards Act, incident standby premium pay and associated hours shall be disregarded.

“(d) A covered employee’s designated sleep and rest periods shall be fixed at 9 hours for every 24-hour duty
period associated with a qualifying incident, including neces-
sary travel time. If the hours of an incident deployment are not an exact multiple of 24-hour periods, the ratio of 9/24 shall be multiplied by hours for the less-than-24-hours period of duty to derive the designated sleep and rest period for that duty period, with the result rounded to the nearest fractional increment established by the agency in tracking hours of work.

“(e) Incident standby premium pay under this section—

“(1) is not considered part of the basic pay of an employee for any purpose;

“(2) may not be considered in determining an employee’s lump-sum payment for accumulated and accrued annual leave under section 5551 or section 5552;

“(3) may not be used in determining pay under section 8114 (related to workers’ compensation); and

“(4) may not be considered in determining pay for hours of paid leave or other paid time off during which the premium pay is not payable.”.

(b) OTHER EMPLOYEES.—Title 5, United States Code, is further amended—

(1) in section 5544, by—

(A) adding the following:
“(d) A prevailing rate employee described in section 5342(a)(2)(a) shall receive incident standby premium pay under the same terms and conditions that apply to a covered employee under section 5545c if such employee is employed by the forest service or the department of the interior and—

“(1) qualifies as a wildland firefighter based on the definitions of ‘firefighter’ and ‘wildland firefighter’ in section 5332a(a); or

“(2) is certified by the applicable agency to perform wildland fire incident related duties during the period such employee is assigned to a qualifying incident (as defined in section 5545c(a)(5)).”; and

(B) amending the section heading to read:

“Wage-board overtime, Sunday rates, and other premium pay”;

(2) in section 5545, by adding at the end the following:

“(e) For an employee of the Forest Service or the Department of the Interior who is temporarily deployed to perform wildland fire incident related duties, subsection (c)(2) shall not apply to hours during such temporary deployment notwithstanding any other provision of law.”;

(3) in section 5545a, by adding at the end the following:
“(l) For an employee of the Forest Service or the Department of the Interior who is temporarily deployed to perform wildland fire incident related duties, subsection (e)(2) shall not apply to hours during such temporary deployment notwithstanding any other provision of law.”;

and

(4) in section 5547(a), by inserting “5545c,” after “5545a,”.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall be effective on the first day of the first applicable pay period beginning on or after October 1, 2023.

(d) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—The table of sections for chapter 55 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by—

(1) amending the item relating to section 5544 to read as follows:

“5544. Wage-board overtime, Sunday rates, and other premium pay.”;

; and

(2) inserting after the item relating to section 5545b the following new item:

“5545c. Incident standby premium pay for employees engaged in wildland firefighting.”.
SEC. 4. SPECIAL LIMITATIONS ON PAY FOR WILDLAND FIREFIGHTERS.

(a) In General.—Title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting after section 5547 the following:

§ 5547a. Special limitations on premium pay for employees engaged in wildland firefighting

“(a) In this section—

“(1) the term ‘covered employee’ means an employee of the Forest Service or the Department of the Interior who—

“(A) qualifies as a wildland firefighter based on the definitions of ‘firefighter’ and ‘wildland firefighter’ in section 5332a(a); or

“(B) is certified by the applicable agency to perform wildland fire incident related duties during the period such employee is assigned to a qualifying incident;

“(2) the term ‘covered services’ means services performed by an employee that are determined by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture, as applicable, to primarily involve emergency wildfire suppression activities, including any periods of duty when the employee is sleeping or...
resting during an extended period of deployment to engage in those activities;

“(3) the term ‘emergency wildland fire suppression activities’ means initial-response and extended-response activities that directly relate to suppression of a wildfire, including activities associated with a severity incident but excluding activities associated with a prescribed fire incident (as those terms are defined section 5545c); and

“(4) the term ‘premium pay’ means the premium pay paid under the provisions of law cited in section 5547(a), except as otherwise provided in subsection (h).

“(b) Any premium pay earned by a covered employee for covered services shall be disregarded in calculating the aggregate of such employee’s basic pay and premium pay for purposes of applying a limitation under section 5547.

“(c) Any premium pay that is disregarded under subsection (b) shall be disregarded in calculating such employee’s aggregate pay for purposes of applying the limitation in section 5307.

“(d) Pay that is disregarded under subsection (b) may not be paid to the extent it would cause the aggregate of the employee’s basic pay, premium pay, and hazard pay under section 5545(d) payable in the applicable calendar
year to exceed the rate of basic pay payable for a position
at level II of the Executive Schedule under section 5313,
as in effect at the end of such calendar year. Any premium
pay that is subject to a biweekly limitation under section
5547(c) must be paid first before other premium pay in
applying the level II limitation.

"(e) Application of the limit in subsection (d) or sub-
section (h) to a covered employee may be waived at the
sole and exclusive discretion of the Secretary of the Inter-
ior or the Secretary of Agriculture, as applicable. Before
authorizing such a waiver for employees of their respective
agencies, each Secretary, after consulting with the other
Secretary, shall prescribe criteria that will be applied in
making a determination to grant a waiver.

"(f) Any additional pay resulting from application of
this section may not be used in computing a lump-sum
payment for accumulated and accrued annual leave under
section 5551 or section 5552.

"(g) The Departments of the Interior and Agri-
culture shall maintain records that document uses of the
authority provided by this section.

"(h)(1) For prevailing rate employees described in
section 5342(a)(2)(A) who meet the requirements in sub-
section (a)(1) to qualify as a covered employee, premium
pay may not be paid to the extent it would cause the ag-
aggregate of the employee's basic pay and premium pay in
the applicable calendar year to exceed the rate of basic
pay payable for a position at level II of the Executive
Schedule under section 5313, as in effect at the end of
such calendar year.

“(2) For the purposes of this subsection, the term
‘basic pay’ means wages, environmental differential pay,
and night shift differential pay, and the term ‘premium
pay’ means overtime pay, Sunday premium pay, and holi-
day premium pay.”; and

(2) in section 5541(2)(xi), by inserting“, section
5547a(h),” after “section 5544”.

(b) CALENDAR YEAR 2023.—For the purpose of ap-
plying section 5547 and section 1701 of division B of Pub-
lic Law 117–43 (5 U.S.C. 5547 note) in calendar year
2023, incident standby premium pay shall be included in
premium pay that is subject to the limits established in
those sections.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
subsection (a) shall take effect on the first day of the first
pay period that has a payment date in January 2024. Sub-
section (b) shall be effective on the first day of the first
applicable pay period beginning on or after October 1,
2023.
(d) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 55 of title 5, United States Code, is further amended by inserting after the item for section 5547 the following new item:

“5547a. Special limitations on premium pay for employees engaged in wildland firefighting.”.

SEC. 5. REST AND RECUPERATION LEAVE FOR EMPLOYEES ENGAGED IN WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 6329d the following:

“§ 6329e. Rest and recuperation leave for employees engaged in wildland firefighting

“(a) In this section—

“(1) the term ‘applicable Secretary’ means the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary of the Interior;

“(2) the term ‘covered employee’ means an employee of the Forest Service or the Department of the Interior who—

“(A) qualifies as a ‘wildland firefighter’ based on the definitions of ‘firefighter’ and ‘wildland firefighter’ in section 5332a(a) (applying the definition of ‘employee’ in section 6301(2) in lieu of the definition of ‘employee’ in section 5331(a)); or
“(B) is certified by the applicable agency
to perform wildland fire incident related duties
during the period such employee is assigned to
a qualifying incident; and
“(3) the term ‘qualifying incident’ has the
meaning given that term in section 5545c(a)(5).
“(b) A covered employee may receive paid rest and
recuperation leave following the completion of service
under a qualifying incident, subject to policies established
at the sole and exclusive discretion of the Secretary of the
Agriculture or the Secretary of the Interior, as applicable.
Each Secretary shall prescribe such policies after con-
sulting with the other Secretary.
“(c) Rest and recuperation leave granted under this
section shall be used during scheduled hours within the
covered employee’s tour of duty established for leave-
charging purposes and shall be paid in the same manner
as annual leave. Rest and recuperation leave must be used
immediately after a qualifying incident and may not be
set aside for later use. A covered employee may not receive
any payment for unused rest and recuperation leave.
“(d) A covered employee with an intermittent work
schedule shall be excused from duty during the same pe-
riod of time that other covered employees in the same cir-
cumstances are entitled to rest and recuperation leave and
shall receive a payment as if the covered employee with an intermittent work schedule were entitled to rest and recuperation leave under subsections (b) and (c).”.

(b) **Effective Date.**—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall be effective on the first day of the first applicable pay period beginning on or after October 1, 2023.

(c) **Clerical Amendment.**—The table of sections for subchapter II of chapter 63 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 6329d the following new item:

“6329e. Rest and recuperation leave for employees engaged in wildland firefighting.”.

**SEC. 6. Health Provisions.**

(a) **Database; Recommendations.**—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretaries shall—

(1) establish and maintain a publicly accessible, searchable database on a website, to be called the “Federal Wildland Firefighter Cancer and Cardiovascular Disease Database”, to track chronic disease caused by on-the-job environmental exposure over the lifetimes of current and former Federal wildland firefighters;

(2) update such database not less than on a yearly basis; and
(3) develop and adhere to recommendations on
mitigation strategies to minimize exposure to envi-
ronmental hazards for Federal wildland firefighters.

(b) MENTAL HEALTH.—

(1) MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM.—Not later
than January 1, 2024, the Secretaries shall establish
and carry out a program for Federal wildland fire-
fighters for mental health awareness and support.
Such program shall include the following:

(A) A mental health awareness campaign.

(B) A mental health education and train-
ing program that includes an on-boarding cur-
riculum.

(C) An extensive peer-to-peer mental
health support network for Federal wildland
firefighters and their immediate family.

(D) Expansion of the Critical Incident
Stress Management Program, to develop and
retain a larger pool of qualified mental health
professionals who are familiar with the experi-
ences of the emergency response workforce. The
Program shall monitor and track mental health
in the profession to better understand the scope
of the issue and provide ongoing assistance and
professional long term care to patients.
(E) Establish and carry out a new and distinctive mental health support service specific to Federal wildland firefighters and their immediate family, with culturally relevant and trauma informed mental health professionals who are readily available, and not subject to any limit on the number of sessions or service provided.

(2) Mental Health Leave.—Each Federal wildland firefighter shall be entitled to 7 consecutive days of leave, without loss or reduction in pay, during any calendar year. Leave provided under this paragraph shall not—

(A) accumulate for use in succeeding years; and

(B) be considered to be annual or vacation leave for purposes of section 5551 or 5552 of title 5, United States Code, or for any other purpose.

(e) Coordination.—In carrying out subsections (a) and (b), the Secretaries may enter into partnerships or cooperative agreements with other Federal agencies, universities, or non-profit institutions.

(d) OWCP.—The Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs within the Department or Labor shall—
(1) recognize post-traumatic stress disorder and psychological stress-related injuries or illnesses correlated to fire protection, suppression, and incident support activities, and ensure long term coverage for the duration of the illnesses; and

(2) expand the Special Claims Unit to ensure adequate unit staffing levels are sufficient to expedite the claims process and shorten response times to wildland firefighter and incident support personnel injured or effected on the job in order to alleviate the psychological and financial burdens placed on the patient and their families.

SEC. 7. RETIREMENT FOR FIREFIGHTERS.

(a) DEPOSIT SERVICE.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any service performed by an individual as a Federal wildland firefighter on or after January 1, 1989, for which retirement deductions under chapter 84 of title 5, United States Code, have not been made shall be creditable under such chapter, but only if such firefighter—

(1) submits a written election to the Director; and

(2) the deposit requirements of section 8411(f) of such title had been met with respect to such service.
(b) Disability Annuity.—Beginning on the date of enactment of this Act, any Federal wildland firefighter who suffers from a disease described in section 8143b(b)(2) of title 5, United States Code, due to environmental job-related exposure, including smoke inhalation, silicate inhalation, and firefighting toxic exposure, shall be considered to be disabled for purposes of section 8451 of such title. Such section 8451 shall be applied to any such firefighter by substituting “12 months” for “18 months”.

(c) Including Overtime as Basic Pay.—Section 8331(3) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (H), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (I), by inserting “and” after the semicolon;

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (I) the following:

“(J) with respect to a Federal wildland firefighter (as that term is defined in section 1(b) of the Tim Hart Wildland Firefighter Classification and Pay Parity Act), overtime pay received on or after the date of enactment of this subparagraph;”; and

(4) in the undesignated matter following subparagraph (J) (as added by paragraph (3)), by strik-
(d) **SEPARATE NORMAL-COST PERCENTAGE.**—Section 8423(a)(1)(B)(i) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by inserting after “firefighters,” the following: “Federal wildland firefighter (as that term is defined in section 1 of the Tim Hart Wildland Firefighter Classification and Pay Parity Act),”.

**SEC. 8. PAY PARITY FOR FEDERAL STRUCTURAL FIREFIGHTERS.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, any pay, benefits, and bonuses provided to any Federal structural firefighter shall be comparable with the pay, benefits, and bonuses provided for Federal wildland firefighters under this Act and the amendments made by this Act. Not later than 1 year after the date the pay scale is established under section 5332a of title 5, United States Code, as added by section 2 of this Act, the Director shall submit a report to Congress on whether pay for such Federal structural firefighters is competitive with Federal wildland firefighters.

(b) **FEDERAL STRUCTURAL FIREFIGHTER DEFINED.**—In this section, the term “Federal structural firefighter”—
(1) has the meaning given the term “fire-fighter” in section 8401 of chapter 84 of title 5, United States Code; and

(2) does not include any Federal wildland fire-fighter.

SEC. 9. OTHER MATTERS.

(a) Annual Adjustments.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, beginning in the first pay period beginning on or after the date that the pay scale is established under section 5332a of title 5, United States Code, as added by section 2 of this Act, and annually thereafter, the basic rate of pay for each Federal wildland firefighter occupying a position within such pay scale shall be increased by not less than the percentage equal to the percent change in the Consumer Price Index (all items—United States city average), published monthly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for December of the preceding year over such Consumer Price Index for the December of the year prior to the preceding year, adjusted to the nearest one-tenth of 1 percent.

(b) Compensation Comparable to Non-Federal Firefighters.—Not later than 1 year after the date the pay scale is established under section 5332a of title 5, United States Code, as added by section 2 of this Act, the Secretaries shall submit a report to Congress on
whether pay, benefits, and bonuses provided to Federal
wildland firefighters are comparable to the pay, benefits,
and bonuses provided for non-Federal firefighters in the
State or locality where Federal wildland firefighters are
based.

(c) HAZARDOUS DUTY PAY.—Each Federal wildland
firefighter carrying out work completed during prescribed
fire, parachuting, tree climbing over 20 feet, hazard tree
removal, and other hazardous work as identified by the
Secretaries, shall be entitled to be paid the appropriate
differential under section 5545(d) of title 5, United States
Code, as if such employee was covered by such section.
The Director may prescribe regulations to carry out this
subsection.

(d) OTHER MATTERS.—

(1) UNPAID LEAVE TO CARE FOR FAMILY MEM-
BER.—A Federal wildland firefighter not covered by
the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 or sub-
chapter V of chapter 63 of title 5, United States
Code, shall be allowed a period of unpaid leave, dur-
ing each calendar year, not to exceed 180 days in
order to care for the spouse, or a son, daughter, or
parent, of the employee, if such spouse, son, daugh-
ter, or parent has a serious health condition. Leave
provided under this paragraph shall not accumulate for use in subsequent years.

(2) Recruitment and retention bonus.—

In order to promote the recruitment and retention of Federal wildland firefighters, the Director, in coordination with the Secretaries, shall establish a program under which a recruitment or retention bonus of not less than $1,000 may be paid to a Federal wildland firefighter in an amount as determined appropriate by the Director and the Secretaries. The minimum amount of such bonus in the previous sentence shall be increased each year by the Consumer Price Index in the manner prescribed under subsection (a). Any bonus under this subsection—

(A) shall be paid to any primary or secondary Federal wildland firefighter upon the date that such firefighter successfully completes a work capacity test; and

(B) may not be paid to any such firefighter more than once per calendar year.

(3) Housing allowance.—The Secretaries, if the Secretaries are not already providing reasonable housing accommodations, shall provide a housing allowance to any Federal wildland firefighter deployed to a location more than 50 miles from their primary...
residence. Such allowance shall be in an amount determined appropriate by the Secretaries and adjusted based on the cost of housing in the area of deployment.

(4) CAREER TRANSITION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretaries, shall establish, maintain, coordinate, and operate a voluntary tuition assistance program for Federal wildland firefighters occupying a permanent position that encompass a broad range of educational experiences (either in-person or through distance-learning), including academic skills development, vocational programs, career and technical programs, and programs leading to the award of undergraduate and graduate degrees.

(B) AMOUNT.—The program under subparagraph (A) shall provide, not more than once during each calendar year, a payment of not less than $4,000 to each Federal wildland firefighter who elects to participate in the program.

(C) REVIEW.—The Secretaries shall conduct an annual review of whether the amount
provided under subparagraph (B) is adequate,
in consideration of inflation and other effects.