



National Volunteer Fire Council

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April 20, 2005

The Honorable John B. Larson
1005 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0701

Dear Representative Larson:

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is a non-profit membership association representing the more than 800,000 members of America's volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. On behalf of our membership, I would like to express our support for your legislation, H.R. 1405, which would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prevent the Internal Revenue Service from taxing the property tax rebates and other nominal compensation awarded to local volunteer firefighters and emergency medical responders for service to their communities.

As you know, 75% of firefighters are volunteers who respond to a wide array of emergencies – including structure and wildland fires, medical calls, motor vehicle accidents, natural disasters and acts of terrorism. However, the recruitment and retention of volunteer fire and EMS personnel has become one of the major challenges facing the service. The ranks of the volunteers have decreased over 10% in the last 20 years.

By providing a small incentive to these brave men and women who risk their life for little or no compensation, the Federal government can help to reverse this trend. The cost of this tax incentive to the Federal government would be quite small compared to the estimated \$37.2 billion annual cost savings provided by the volunteer emergency services.

Once again, the NVFC strongly supports this legislation and we look forward to working with you to pass it in the 109th Congress. We commend you for your continued dedication to the America's volunteer fire and emergency services. If you or your staff have any questions feel free to contact Craig Sharman, NVFC Director of Government Relations at (202) 887-5700 ext.12.

Sincerely,

Philip C. Stittleburg

Philip C. Stittleburg
Chairman

cc: NVFC Board of Directors