



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS®

HAROLD A. SCHAIBERGER
General President

VINCENT J. BOLLON
General Secretary-Treasurer

July 25, 2006

Member of Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the nation's more than 270,000 professional fire fighters and emergency medical personnel, I am writing to express the IAFF's grave concerns regarding H.R. 5766, the Government Efficiency Act of 2006. We fear that the establishment of "sunset commissions" as proposed by this bill could undermine important public safety initiatives.

As you are aware, Congress has strongly supported a number of fire service programs on a bipartisan basis in recent years. This support has unfortunately not extended to the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, as each of the last two Administrations—one Democrat and one Republican—demonstrated unwavering opposition to such programs. Congress has repeatedly rejected recommendations from the White House to abolish or cut funding for vital public safety initiatives, and for this we are deeply grateful.

It is from this perspective that we oppose the creation of sunset commissions. While we are happy to have Congress debate the merits of any programs we support, we believe that this debate should occur through the normal legislative process. We fear that presidentially-appointed sunset commissions could be used to circumvent the will of Congress, and provide the Administration with a "back-door" method to eliminate programs or proposals to which it is opposed, such as the FIRE Act.

We understand and appreciate the desire to eliminate wasteful and duplicative government programs. But requiring Congress to act on recommendations of an unelected commission appointed by the Administration threatens to undermine programs that have been proven to be successful and cost effective. We therefore urge your opposition to proposals establishing sunset commissions.

Thank you for your consideration and support of America's first responders.

Sincerely,



Barry Kasinitz
Director, Governmental Affairs