

# IAFF LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEET

## IMPROVING EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

*The IAFF supports efforts to improve the delivery of emergency medical services, and opposes efforts to undermine fire-service based EMS delivery systems.*

### BACKGROUND

The vast majority of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in the United States is performed by fire fighters who have been fully trained as paramedics and emergency medical technicians. Nationwide, fire-based emergency medical services is the predominate model of delivering pre-hospital medical care. Fire service-based EMS has been found to provide the safest and most comprehensive patient care, and is the most efficient and cost effective method of delivering emergency medical services.

Recently, proposals which undermine the improvement and discourage the use of fire-based EMS have surfaced in Congress. One specific proposal, the *Field EMS Quality, Innovation and Cost Effectiveness Improvement Act*, assumes and promotes EMS as a separate and distinct profession rather than a significant and crucial component of the work performed by first responders – most notably – fire fighters. By creating a powerful new agency within the Department of Health and Human Services and subsidizing for-profit entities, the legislation undermines the delivery of quality and cost-effective EMS by trained emergency responders.

Improving EMS delivery would be better-accomplished through the enhancement and improvement of existing programs, rather than creating a new federal bureaucracy.

### CURRENT LEGISLATION

*House:* H.R. 809, the Field EMS Quality, Innovation and Cost-Effectiveness Improvement Act  
*Sponsor:* Representative Larry Bucshon (R-IN)

*Summary:* H.R. 809 would undermine fire service-based EMS delivery systems. Specifically, among its many provisions, the Act would:

- Establish an Office of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma within the Department of Health and Human Services to serve as the lead federal agency for pre-hospital EMS, and
- Establish a number of new grant programs to provide funding to EMS agencies, including for-profit corporations, for the purposes of promoting EMS as a distinct profession separate from emergency response.

### CONGRESSIONAL ACTION

On February 25, 2013, H.R. 809 was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives and referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce as well as the Committee on Ways and Means.