



National Volunteer Fire Council

1050 17th Street, NW, Suite 490, Washington, DC 20036; 202/887-5700 phone; 202/887-5291 fax
www.nvfc.org • nvfcoffice@nvfc.org

November 14, 2005

DEC 01 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, the Nursing Home Fire Safety Act, which would provide incentives for nursing homes to be fitted with properly functioning fire sprinkler systems greatly reducing the chance of injury or death to older Americans in case of fire.

On February 26, 2003, a fire at a Hartford, Connecticut, nursing facility without an automatic fire sprinkler system claimed the lives of 16 patients. Also on September 27, 2003, a fire at a Nashville, Tennessee, nursing home without an automatic fire sprinkler system claimed the lives of 15 patients. In a June 2004 report, the GAO found that "the substantial loss of life in the Hartford and Nashville fires could have been reduced or eliminated by the presence of properly functioning automatic sprinkler systems," and that "federal oversight of nursing home compliance with fire safety standards is inadequate."

The National Fire Protection Association finds no record of a multiple death fire in a nursing facility equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system. An estimated 1.5 million Americans reside in approximately 17,000 nursing facilities nationwide, an estimated 20 to 30 percent of which lack an automatic fire sprinkler system. So by enacting this legislation we could greatly reduce the occurrence of death in case of fire in nursing homes nationwide.

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 Dave Finger, NVFC Director of Government Relations at (202) 887-5700, ext.12.

Sincerely,

Philip C. Stittleburg

Philip C. Stittleburg
Chairman

cc: NVFC Board of Directors