



Protecting Firefighters from Adverse Substances (PFAS) Alternatives Act of 2026

Led in the Senate by: Senators Peter Welch (D-Vt.); John Curtis (R-Idaho); Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.); Deb Fischer (R-Neb.); Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.); Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.); Angela Alsobrooks (D-Md.); Ron Wyden (D-Ore.); Michael Bennet (D-Colo.); Elissa Slotkin (D-Mich.); Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.); Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.); Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.); Ed Markey (D-Mass.)

Led in the House by: Reps. Debbie Dingell (D-MI-06); Sam Graves (R-MO-06); Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR-01); Tom Kean, Jr. (R-NJ-07); Dina Titus (D-NV-01); Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-01); Glenn Ivey (D-MD-04); Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-PA-15)

Background: Firefighting is considered a Group 1 carcinogenic risk—the [highest level](#) indication that an occupational exposure can cause cancer—by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#). Firefighters are [exposed](#) to a variety of carcinogens and toxic chemicals during and after responding to emergency events, including toxic combustion products like liquid, gas, diesel fuel, and particulate matter. Additionally, all three layers of firefighters' protective clothing, also known as turnout gear, are coated with [per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances \(PFAS\)](#), chemicals that release suspected carcinogens.

Turnout gear that does not include PFAS would reduce the dangers to firefighters' health, including enhancing protection against primary and secondary exposure to particulates and byproducts of combustion; reducing maintenance that includes contamination resistance and greater ease of cleaning; creating visible warning indicators to alert firefighters to hazardous exposures or the need for decontamination; and considering body composition in turnout gear design. Investing federal dollars into PFAS-free gear development would help protect the health of those on the frontline while also encouraging more manufacturers to develop the gear.

Legislation: The bipartisan, bicameral *PFAS Alternatives Act of 2026* aims to support the development of next-generation PFAS-free turnout gear for firefighters and better protect them from the dangers of their work. Specifically, the legislation would authorize a \$25 million annual grant program from FY27-FY31 within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to research, develop, and test PFAS-free firefighter turnout gear.

Grant recipients would have to demonstrate apt leadership, experience, and knowledge of the firefighting profession in their application. The bill provides an additional \$2 million annually to train firefighters on best practices for reducing harmful exposures through training on proper wearing, cleaning, and caring of PFAS-free turnout gear.

Supporting Organizations: The *PFAS Alternatives Act of 2026* is supported by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF).