



National Smokejumper Association

October 15, 2025

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Chairman Walberg, and Ranking Member Scott:

On behalf of the National Smokejumper Association, I write in strong support of the *Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act* (H.R. HR - 3170).

Smokejumpers, other wildland fire fighters, and many federal employees perform physically demanding and often dangerous work facing many hazardous situations. While safety is a top priority, these essential employees are occasionally injured in the line of duty. When serious injuries occur, they rely on the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) for medical treatment and support. However, in many parts of the country particularly in rural areas, there is a critical shortage of physicians available to treat federal workers under FECA.

As a result, injured workers in rural areas have to travel great distances to have access to medical doctors. Although nurse practitioners (NPs) and physician assistants (PAs) are often available and qualified to provide care in rural clinics, current Department of Labor rules do not allow their medical reports or evaluations to be used to support FECA claims.

This gap in policy leads to serious consequences. Injured workers often are forced to travel long distances and endure lengthy delays to receive care. These delays can worsen their health outcomes and increase costs to the federal government by keeping employees out of work longer. Allowing NPs and PAs to treat injured federal employees under FECA would improve access to timely, quality care, strengthen the federal workforce, and reduce unnecessary costs.

Other major federal health programs—including Medicare, Medicaid, TRICARE, and the Veterans Health Administration—already recognize nurse practitioners and physician assistants as approved providers. We recommend that the FECA also recognizes nurse practitioners and physician assistants as approved providers.

Federal employees deserve prompt and high-quality medical treatment when injured on the job. We strongly urge you to advance and pass H.R. 3170, the *Improving Access to Workers' Compensation for Injured Federal Workers Act*.

Sincerely,

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