

# Tubbs Jones Introduces Campus Fire Safety Legislation



Washington, D.C.—January 23, 2007, Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones re-introduced three bipartisan pieces of legislation regarding Campus Fire Safety; the Campus Fire Safety Month Resolution, The College Fire and Prevention Act and the Collegiate Housing and Infrastructure Act. Rep. Ed Whitefield (R-KY) is the original co-sponsor for both the Campus Fire Safety Month Resolution and the College Fire and Prevention Act and Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) is the original co-sponsor of the Collegiate Housing and Infrastructure Act.

## A Resolution Establishing Campus Fire Safety Month

This legislation would establish September as “Campus Fire Safety Month” and encourage administrators and municipalities across the country to provide educational programs to all students during September and throughout the school year on fire safety. Additionally, the resolution encourages administrators and municipalities across the country to evaluate the level of fire safety being provided in both on- and off-campus student housing and taking the necessary steps to ensure fire-safe living environments through fire safety education, installation of fire suppression and detection systems and the development and enforcement of applicable codes relating to fire safety. This legislation was adopted in the 109th Congress on September 27, 2006 by unanimous consent.

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## The College Fire and Infrastructure Act

The College Fire and Prevention Act would establish a demonstration incentive program within the Department of Education to promote installation of fire sprinkler systems, or other fire suppression or prevention technologies, in qualified student housing or dormitories, and for other purposes. The National Educational Association, The National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, National Fire Sprinkler Association and the National Fire Protection Association have endorsed this legislation. This bill has twenty original co-sponsors. This legislation was originally introduced in the 107th Congress, and re-introduced in the 108th and 109th Congresses.

## The College Housing and Infrastructure Act

This legislation erases the disparity between gifts made to colleges and universities for infrastructure improvements and gifts made to fraternities and sororities for the benefit of similarly situated students. This allows tax deductible contributions to fraternity and sorority foundations to be used for the same purposes that a college or university could use such contributions (except for physical fitness equipment).

“Fire safety and prevention is an issue that needs to be *addressed on College Campuses across the United States*,” said Rep. Tubbs Jones. “Over the past few years we have seen many tragedies involving fire at colleges, places of business, entertainment venues and places of residence. We must begin to put in place suppression measures against fires and increase support and resources for our fire fighters to ensure that no more lives are lost to fires that could have been prevented. These three pieces of legislation will help to put those measures in place and ultimately save lives.”

Nationwide, 99 people have been killed in student housing since January 2000 and Ohio has had the most deaths of any state, as identified by the Center for Campus Fire Safety, a non-profit organization that compiles information on campus-related fires. Almost 80 percent of the fire fatalities have occurred in off-campus occupancies such as rented houses and apartments. Common factors in a number of these fires include: lack of automatic sprinklers, disabled smoke alarms, careless disposal of smoking materials, and alcohol consumption.