

VIRGINIA PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS

I.A.F.F. • AFL-CIO-CLC

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As professional fire fighters, we all take great pride in our careers, our country, and in the work we do to keep our communities safe and secure. As a union, we have banded together to protect our members' rights, enhance their safety, protect their pensions and ensure their fair pay and health care benefits.

Yet, as we approach November 4th, our profession is facing some of its greatest challenges yet. Rising health care costs, stagnant wages and the continued erosion of our retirement benefits all make this Election Day one of the most important in recent memory. The decisions we make in the ballot box have the potential to allow us to build upon our union's successes. As your state president, I want to share with you some of the issues I believe are most crucial to our members, and respectfully ask that you consider them as you decide who to support in November.

For President, the VPFF has endorsed Senator Barack Obama. While Senator McCain deserves to be honored for his service to our country, his record on issues that relate to your rights, your safety and your financial well-being is very poor. Senator Obama has spent his political career fighting for the fire service. As state senator in Illinois, Obama worked to protect the right of Illinois fire fighters to collect overtime pay, worked to improve fire fighter pensions and strengthen benefits for fire fighter families.

Obama has continued to work on our behalf in the U.S. Senate. Obama cosponsored the IAFF's collective bargaining bill and voted for it earlier this year. John McCain opposes the bill, voted against it in 2001 and, unlike Senator Obama, refused to return to D.C. to vote on the bill earlier this year.

Obama supports national protections guaranteeing overtime pay through the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), while John McCain has gone on record as supporting judicial nominees that would take those rights away. Furthermore, while Senator Obama wants to strengthen employer-paid healthcare like we have in Virginia, John McCain wants to tax your health benefits for the first time ever. Under the McCain proposal, the average fire fighter will face almost \$3000 a year in new taxes.

An Obama presidency represents the best chance we have to protect the successes we have won thus far, and will allow us to expand our members' rights, wages and benefits.

In addition to the presidential election, **the VPPF has endorsed former Governor Mark Warner in the race for U.S. Senate.** As Governor, Mark Warner promoted a safer staffing standard for fire fighters, adding \$1 million to the state budget to improve local staffing. He supported and signed the law extending presumptive disability benefits to fire fighters who contract infectious diseases on the job, and he added a union VPPF member to the VRS Board for the first time in history.

Many of you will also have the opportunity to vote in important Congressional races. **The VPPF has endorsed Gerry Connelly (D), Frank Wolf (R), Jim Moran (D), and Glenn Nye (D).**

We are a diverse union, and I recognize and respect that our members have a wide range of political opinions. While each IAFF member must make decisions about who to vote for based on the issues most important to them, I respectfully ask that you consider which candidates would best serve your health and safety, your standard of living and the financial security of you and your family.

To learn more about the candidates and their records, please visit our website at www.vpff.org.

In closing, thank you for your support of your local union, the IAFF and the Virginia Professional Fire Fighters.

Sincerely and Fraternaly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R. Michael Mohler". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

R. Michael Mohler