



# INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

HAROLD A. SCHAITBERGER  
General President

November 15, 2010

Chief Mike Brown, Executive Director  
Washington Fire Chiefs  
605 11th Avenue SE Suite 211  
Olympia, Washington 98501

Dear Chief Brown:

As the Washington Fire Chiefs and the Washington State Council of Fire Fighters begin the Labor Management “No Secrets” Symposium, I want to extend my best wishes to all of you.

I would like to extend a personal note of thanks and admiration to both organizations for understanding and emphasizing the importance of working together, out in the open, to achieve shared goals and overcome differences.

By the time your crucial Symposium begins, the congressional deck in Washington, DC, will have been thoroughly reshuffled. I suspect many soon-to-be former lawmakers will wish they had worked as hard as your organizations have to address their differences with those who represent a different point of view.

I would also like to take a moment to remember Dan Packer, past president of the Washington Fire Chiefs, who died in 2008 fighting wildfires in California. As you know, members of the International Association of Fire Fighters remember and honor their fallen brothers and sisters. Dan’s passing in the line of duty serves as a reminder of the dangers we all face, and we join you in honoring his commitment to the fire service.

Reading the headlines, one might think that labor and management are always adversaries with conflicting goals. We all know that to be a false equation. We know that when we work together we can improve our profession, increase our safety and better protect the public.

Working together, the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the IAFF were able to enact NFPA 1710, a standard of historic proportions that makes our jobs safer, our fire departments better, and saves the lives of fire fighters and the citizens we protect.

We will not always agree. But we have learned over the years that when it comes to debating the critically important issues facing our profession, it is always best for labor and management to lay it all out on the table.

Working in this way, we will continue to build a foundation of trust between fire chiefs and fire fighters that will make us all stronger in the end.

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Working together, the WFC and WSCFF locked arms to defeat ill-conceived referenda that threatened the fire service in your state. One proposal would have privatized workers' comp insurance. Another referendum would have privatized the sale of liquor, which would have drained general fund revenues from local governments and reduced the funds that are essential to providing effective public safety.

Congratulations on defeating both initiatives. Ill-conceived, slogan-driven political campaigns have a habit of gaining traction, but the WFC and the WSCFF showed that working together will pay off in the end.

I hope that you have a great and productive symposium. God bless you, and stay safe.

Sincerely,



Harold A. Schaitberger  
General President

cc: Kelly L. Fox, President, Washington State Council of Fire Fighters  
Ricky Walsh, IAFF 7th District Vice President