

other similar fire-fighting organization. As in the case of educational and health requirements, the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare would determine whether the property is useful and needed and allocate it for transfer by the Administrator of General Services to the duly authorized State agency for fair and equitable distribution.

Property donated for volunteer fire-fighting purposes is subject to compliance provisions similar to those which apply to the education and health activities.

Volunteer fire-fighting organizations would not be entitled to a priority. They would receive property through the regular channels of allocation and distribution.

H. R. 13673 specifically amends existing legislation to provide that property shall be donated without cost except for direct costs of care and handling. This provision will reduce unnecessary paperwork, prevent misunderstandings, and will be generally beneficial.

Congress has made surplus property available for civil defense purposes and volunteer fire-fighting organizations perform civil defense functions and all property donated to them is available in case of disaster.

This is a fine piece of legislation which will benefit the country and help the fine men who serve so well. I strongly urge its passage.

(Mr. HEMPHILL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McCORMACK. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the author of the bill, the gentleman from Rhode Island [Mr. FOGARTY].

Mr. FOGARTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill.

(Mr. FOGARTY asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOGARTY. Mr. Speaker, as you know I am interested in the expansion of the surplus personal property program to the degree that it may be possible to include voluntary fire departments. I have for many years been a member of such a voluntary department and believe that I have some appreciation of their problems.

There are many thousands of volunteer fire departments throughout the country which provide the only property protection their local communities have against fires and floods. Most of the communities served by these volunteer fire departments are small and cannot afford a paid fire department. Even if they could afford a paid department, it would not be economical for them to do so.

In these communities many public buildings, such as schools and hospitals, require fire protection not only to avoid the loss or damage to these buildings due to fire or other disaster but at the same time to provide trained fire fighting personnel so as to reduce the chances of injuries and loss of lives as a result of such disasters.

Fire insurance rates for all property holders in a community are greatly reduced when some form of an organized fire department is available. Fires each year destroy property valued at hundreds of millions of dollars and these losses not only reduce the wealth of the Nation but also cause insurance rates to increase even for those individuals served by paid fire departments.

Volunteer fire departments provide one opportunity for a community to enter into a cooperative program providing a positive influence as well as economic benefits. Many of these organizations become the center of the community's activities. Individuals who take part in volunteer fire departments become better informed and conscious of fire hazards and will take steps to remove them. It is also a usual practice for such organizations to develop and conduct training programs in fire prevention. Many fires can be prevented by removing the causes and these causes can only be removed by better-informed citizens.

The property needs of a volunteer fire department are comparatively simple. They need some sort of a modern fire truck, together with fire hose, portable extinguishers, ladders, and similar items. These items frequently generate a surplus property and often may be passed over by State screeners because there may be no known need for this type of property for health, educational, or civil-defense purposes.

By making volunteer fire departments eligible to obtain surplus property, it would remove the inequities that now develop when certain volunteer fire departments obtain surplus property as being a civil-defense unit established pursuant to State law, and similar volunteer fire departments cannot obtain the property because they are not designated by the State civil-defense authorities as a civil-defense unit. Furthermore, the present law is causing FCDA compliance problems and local administrative problems inasmuch as it is difficult to draw a line as to what is and is not a legitimate civil-defense use for this property. In many States, fire trucks are not donated to fire departments unless the department already has a truck and the donated truck will be used as an auxiliary to one already in existence. It is logical to presume that any fire equipment donated to a fire department should always be available for use in all phases of fire protection.

Firefighting equipment may now be donated to health and educational institutions and many of these institutions are obtaining this equipment in order to have needed protection. However, this equipment has little value unless you have the personnel trained to use it in cases of fires. This trained personnel is not available to the average health or educational institution. These institutions cannot legally turn donated firefighting equipment over to the local fire department which may have trained personnel available. As a result, the community does not receive the protection it requires and maximum utilization of the equipment is not realized.

In view of the foregoing, I solicit your very serious consideration to this proposal.

GENERAL LEAVE TO EXTEND

Mr. McCORMACK. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members who desire to do so may extend their remarks at this point in the Record; and also that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to ex-

tend their remarks on the pending bill. The SPEAKER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

There was no objection.

Mr. HASKELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. R. 13673, a bill to amend the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 to permit the donation of surplus property to volunteer fire-fighting organizations.

Presently only health, education, and civil-defense agencies can receive surplus equipment by paying the cost of care and handling. In my State of Delaware, we have only one paid fire company, all others, numbering some 59, are volunteer groups, men who give of their time and fire-fighting ability to protect the property of their fellow citizens. I have personally contacted all the volunteer fire companies in Delaware, and they are in accord that the passage of such a bill would be of advantage to them and to the communities that contribute to their support.

I feel that it is important that they be given the very best of equipment and as much as possible to do this very important job.

It is for this reason that I strongly urge favorable consideration to be given to this legislation so that the citizens who give unselfishly of their time and place their lives in danger will have the tools to more effectively do their job.

Mr. NEAL. Mr. Speaker, I too have several communities in my district that depend upon voluntary fire-fighting organizations. They perform a service of great value with a minimum of expense to the local people.

Excess Government property adaptable to their use serves no purpose being stored in rental warehouses, whereas it can be made most useful as additions to the meager equipment usually available to these voluntary groups.

I heartily endorse this bill and hope the House will pass it.

Mr. NIMTZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge favorable consideration of H. R. 13673, which is before us. This bill would amend the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, to permit donation of surplus property to volunteer fire-fighting organizations.

The Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, Public Law 152, 81st Congress, as amended by Public Law 61, 84th Congress, 1st session, and Public Law 655, 84th Congress, 2d session, provides that personal property which becomes surplus to all Federal requirements may be donated without cost—except for costs of care and handling—for use in any State, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Territories and possessions of the United States, for use for purposes of education, public health, or civil defense, or for research for any such purpose when the property is determined by proper authority to be useful and necessary for such purposes.

The determination as to whether property is useful and needed for purposes of education and health, except for educational activities which are of special interest to the armed services as determined by the Secretary of Defense, rests with the Secretary of the Department of

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