



The Honoring Hometown Heroes Act

Prepared by the Office of U.S. Representative John Larson

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The Honoring Hometown Heroes Act amends the Flag Code to permit the Governor of a state or territory (or the mayor of the District of Columbia) to order the American flag to be lowered to half-staff in the tragic event that a first responder from that jurisdiction dies while serving in the line of duty. Firefighters, police officers, and other first responders who put their lives on the line to protect their communities deserve the simple but meaningful honor of having the flag flown at half-staff should they make the ultimate sacrifice while serving in the line of duty.

The inspiration for this legislation came from Jim McLoughlin, a Hartford firefighter who founded the National Honor Guard Commanders Association.

The Flag Code

The flag code is contained in Section 7(m) of Title 4 of the U.S. Code. It acts as a guide for how to handle the American flag; although it does not carry penalties or enforcement mechanisms. Under current law, the Governor of a state may order the American flag to be raised at half-staff following the death of a present or former government official or a member of the Armed Forces who dies in combat.

The flag code was last amended in 2007 by the Army Specialist Joseph P. Micks Federal Flag Code Amendment Act (Public Law 110-41). This legislation expanded the criteria where a Governor can order the flag to be lowered to half-staff to include a member of the Armed Forces who dies while serving on active duty.

Supported by:

International Association of Fire Fighters; International Association of Fire Chiefs; National Volunteer Fire Council; Fraternal Order of Police; Congressional Fire Services Institute; Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association; Sergeants Benevolent Association; National Association of Police Organizations; National Fallen Firefighters Foundation; National Honor Guard Commanders Association; National Honor Guard Academy; National Fire Academy Alumni Association; Major County Sheriff's Association; California Fire Foundation; Illinois Fire Chiefs Association; Ohio Fire Chiefs Association; Virginia Fire Chiefs Association; and Local Assistance State Teams (LAST) in Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, and Virginia.