



**CONTACT:**

Ed Comeau  
Director  
The Center for Campus Fire Safety  
(413) 323-6002  
ecomeau@campusfire.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Federal legislation designates September as Campus Fire Safety Month**

**AMHERST, Mass.** May 31, 2005—Landmark legislation has been introduced in Congress designating September as Campus Fire Safety Month. This legislation was announced at Campus Fire Safety Summit 2005, an unprecedented gathering of members of Congress and fire safety experts from across the nation on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC to discuss the issue of campus fire safety. The Summit was co-sponsored by Congresswoman Tubbs Jones (Ohio) and the Center for Campus Fire Safety, a non-profit education and advocacy organization based in Massachusetts.

“We are grateful to Congresswoman Tubbs Jones and Senator DeWine for demonstrating leadership and their support for the safety of our students across the nation,” said Ed Comeau, the director of the Center for Campus Fire safety. “This legislation will help to focus national attention on campus fire safety and the steps that can be taken to protect and educate the future generation about fire safety.”

Over three-fourths of the fire fatalities in student housing since 2000 have occurred in off-campus housing. Common factors in many of these fires include:

- Lack of automatic fire sprinklers
- Missing or disabled smoke alarms
- Careless disposal of smoking materials
- Alcohol consumption

In April alone, six students were killed in four fires at Miami University in Ohio, Southern Adventist University in Tennessee, Penn State in Pennsylvania and at the University of Maryland. Significant fires have recently occurred at Rust College, George Washington University, Alabama A&M and other schools across the nation.

Too often, according to Comeau, fire safety education is something that is not strongly emphasized and this could play a vital role in reducing the number of both on- and off-campus fires. “We have seen too many tragic fires and close calls that could have been prevented through simple fire safety measures, but only if the occupants had been taught these steps,” reported Comeau. “Several of the common factors in the fatal fires involve

personal decisions—decisions that led to tragic consequences. By educating students we will not only protect them while they are in school but in the years to come, helping to reduce the almost 4,000 lives lost each year to fire in the United States.”

*Text of the legislation designating September as Campus Fire Safety Month*

**HOUSE RESOLUTION 295**

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives supporting the establishment of September as Campus Fire Safety Month, and for other purposes.

*Whereas* recent student housing fires in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Maryland have tragically cut short the lives of some of the youth of our Nation;

*Whereas* since January 2000, at least 75 people, including students, parents, and children have died in student housing fires;

*Whereas* over three-fourths of these deaths have occurred in off-campus occupancies;

*Whereas* a majority of the students across the Nation live in off-campus occupancies;

*Whereas* a number of fatal fires have occurred in buildings where the fire safety systems have been compromised or disabled by the occupants;

*Whereas* it is recognized that automatic fire alarm systems provide the necessary early warning to occupants and the fire department of a fire so that appropriate action can be taken;

*Whereas* it is recognized that automatic fire sprinkler systems are a highly effective method of controlling or extinguishing a fire in its early stages, protecting the lives of the building's occupants;

*Whereas* many students are living in off-campus occupancies, Greek housing, and residence halls that are not adequately protected with automatic fire sprinkler systems and automatic fire alarm systems;

*Whereas* it is recognized that fire safety education is an effective method of reducing the occurrence of fires and reducing the resulting loss of life and property damage;

*Whereas* students are not routinely receiving effective fire safety education throughout their entire college career;

*Whereas* it is vital to educate the future generation of our Nation about the importance of fire safety behavior so that these behaviors can help to ensure their safety during their college years and beyond; and

*Whereas* by developing a generation of fire-safe adults, future loss of life from fires can be significantly reduced: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the establishment of September as Campus Fire Safety Month;

(2) encourages administrators and municipalities across the country to provide educational programs to all students during September and throughout the school year; and

(3) encourages administrators and municipalities to evaluate the level of fire safety being provided in both on- and off-campus student housing and take 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.

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*The Center for Campus Fire Safety is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving fire safety on our nation's campuses through education and advocacy and is a leader in campus fire safety. Its operations are guided by a Board of Advisors made up of dedicated professionals and advocates from across the nation. The Center provides information and resources free to the public through its website at [www.campusfire.org](http://www.campusfire.org).*