



NEWS RELEASE

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The International Association of Fire Fighters Formally Censures Virginia Governor Abigail D. Spanberger

August 12, 2026, Arlington, TX -Today, the delegates assembled at the 58th International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) convention voted unanimously to censure the Governor of Virginia, Abigail D. Spanberger.

Submitted by the 11,000 members of the Virginia Professional Fire Fighters (VPFF), the censure was approved by delegates representing over 365,000 firefighters across the United States and Canada. The censure is a formal statement of disapproval and reprimand and directly relates to the Governor's "willful violation of her explicit commitments to Virginia's professional firefighters, emergency medical workers, and the International Association of Fire Fighters" as stated in the censure resolution.

According to Edward A. Kelly, IAFF General President, "Abigail Spanberger turned her back on the very workers who helped put her in the Governor's mansion. But fire fighters have long memories. Today's unanimous censure vote sends a clear message to all elected officials: when you make a promise to fire fighters, we expect you to keep it. It doesn't matter what party you're from – if you break your commitments, the IAFF will hold you accountable."

During Governor Spanberger's campaign for office, she repeatedly committed to signing statewide collective bargaining legislation for Virginia's public safety professionals. This commitment was made publicly and privately to firefighters who steadfastly supported and endorsed her candidacy. Collective bargaining legislation (Senate Bill 378 and House Bill 1263) passed both chambers of the Virginia General Assembly in 2026. The legislation was vetoed by the Governor signaling a clear disregard for the will of Virginia's elected representatives and a violation of the promises made to those who protect the citizens of Virginia.

"Governor Spanberger was a champion for firefighters during her time in the United State House of Representatives. But despite her promises on the campaign trail, and the efforts of the General Assembly in 2026, she vetoed legislation desperately needed by our members," said Kurt Detrick, President of the VPFF. "Our communities hold their firefighters and emergency workers with the utmost trust and respect. We believe our elected officials should strive to maintain those same values."

Additionally, Andrew Pantelis, 4th District Vice President of the IAFF stated, "In my decades of political experience supporting candidates and elected officials from both sides of the aisle, never have I experienced a betrayal such as this. Virginia's workers, and specifically Virginia's firefighters, deserve better."

(con't)

The censure continues to state the IAFF formally opposes Governor Spanberger in any future federal or national political endeavors unless and until she takes meaningful legislative action to enable collective bargaining rights for Virginia's professional firefighters and emergency medical workers.

"We do not take the action of this censure lightly," continued President Detrick. "We want nothing more than to work with the Governor to enact this critically important legislation and support our Commonwealth's public safety professionals. We are willing to sit down with her and discuss the path forward just as we have with members of her party. And if that happens, and legislation is approved as she promised, we will be pleased to retract this censure resolution and publicly communicate her efforts."

A full copy of the approved censure resolution is included with this news release.

The Virginia Professional Fire Fighters is a labor organization of over 11,000 firefighters, emergency medical providers and 911 communications officers across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Established in 1955, the VPFF represents 70 local affiliates of the International Association of Fire Fighters.

The International Association of Fire Fighters is the driving force behind nearly every advance in the fire and emergency services in the 21st century. Representing over 365,000 professional fire fighters, emergency medical workers, and rescue workers, IAFF members protect more than 85 percent of the population throughout the United States and Canada.

#

Resolution No. 64

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT: Resolutions

Re: Censure of Virginia Governor Abigail Spanberger

1 WHEREAS, Virginia has been one of the last
2 states in the country to provide meaningful statutory
3 collective bargaining rights for professional
4 firefighters and paramedics, despite years of
5 sustained effort by the Virginia Professional Fire
6 Fire Fighters and the International Association of
7 Fire Fighters; and

8 WHEREAS, Professional firefighters and
9 emergency medical workers across Virginia have
10 continued to serve their communities without the
11 fundamental workplace protections that their
12 counterparts in other states enjoy, including the right
13 to bargain collectively over wages, benefits, staffing,
14 safety, and working conditions; and

15 WHEREAS, during her tenure in the United
16 States Congress, Abigail Spanberger demonstrated
17 support for the fire service by supporting IAFF
18 priorities including the Assistance to Firefighters
19 Grant program, the Staffing for Adequate Fire and
20 Emergency Response grant program, and the repeal
21 of the Windfall Elimination Provision and
22 Government Pension Offset, earning the trust and
23 support of the IAFF and Virginia's professional
24 firefighters; and

25 WHEREAS, as a candidate for Governor of
26 Virginia, Abigail Spanberger explicitly and

27 repeatedly committed to signing mandatory statewide
28 collective bargaining legislation for Virginia's public
29 safety professionals, including professional
30 firefighters and emergency medical workers
31 employed by local governments; and

32 WHEREAS, the International Association of Fire
33 Fighters and the Virginia Professional Fire Fighters
34 invested significant political resources and financial
35 support in Governor Spanberger's gubernatorial
36 campaign, including direct organizational
37 endorsement and public support from the General
38 President of the IAFF, in reliance upon her stated
39 and repeated commitments to Virginia's professional
40 firefighters and emergency medical workers; and

41 WHEREAS, the Virginia General Assembly
42 passed HB 1263 and SB 378 during the 2026
43 legislative session with strong support, providing
44 mandatory statewide collective bargaining rights for
45 professional firefighters and emergency medical
46 workers, the most significant labor legislation in
47 Virginia history; and

48 WHEREAS, Governor Spanberger subsequently
49 offered a substitute amendment to the legislation
50 that would have delayed collective bargaining rights
51 for local government employees, which includes all
52 professional firefighters and emergency medical
53 workers in Virginia until January 1, 2030, a date
54 beyond her own term in office, while limiting the
55 scope of bargaining to wages only and creating
56 provisions that would have undermined and
57 weakened the existing collective bargaining

58 agreements of seven Virginia IAFF locals that had
59 already achieved contracts under the local option
60 framework; and

61 WHEREAS, the Virginia General Assembly, in a
62 decisive vote, rejected Governor Spanberger's
63 substitute amendment and returned the original bill,
64 the bill that both chambers had passed, to her desk,
65 reflecting the clear and unambiguous will of
66 Virginia's elected representatives; and

67 WHEREAS, on May 14, 2026, the same day as
68 the Virginia Professional Fire Fighters' biennial
69 convention, Governor Spanberger vetoed HB 1263
70 and SB 378, breaking her explicit and repeated
71 commitments to Virginia's professional firefighters,
72 emergency medical workers, and their families, and
73 betraying the trust of the International Association of
74 Fire Fighters; and

75 WHEREAS, Governor Spanberger's veto leaves
76 Virginia as one of the few remaining states without
77 mandatory statewide collective bargaining for
78 professional firefighters and paramedics, denying
79 Virginia's public safety professionals the rights they
80 have earned and deserve; and

81 WHEREAS, the actions of Governor Spanberger
82 represent a fundamental breach of faith with the
83 labor movement and with the professional
84 firefighters and paramedics who risk their lives
85 every day to protect Virginia's communities;
86 therefore be it

87 RESOLVED, That the International Association
88 of Fire Fighters hereby formally censures Governor

89 Abigail Spanberger of Virginia for her veto of HB
90 1263 and SB 378 in direct and willful violation of her
91 explicit commitments to Virginia's professional
92 firefighters, emergency medical workers, and the
93 International Association of Fire Fighters; and be it
94 further

95 RESOLVED, That the IAFF continues to
96 deploying political resources, organizational
97 infrastructure, staff support, and coalition assistance
98 in direct support of Virginia's 2027 legislative
99 session collective bargaining effort, to ensure that the
100 commitments made to Virginia's firefighters and
101 paramedics are finally honored by the
102 Commonwealth; and be it further

103 RESOLVED, That the IAFF formally oppose
104 Governor Spanberger in any future federal or
105 national political endeavors, including but not limited
106 to campaigns for United States Senate, federal
107 appointments, or any national party leadership
108 position, unless and until she takes meaningful
109 legislative action to enable collective bargaining
110 rights for Virginia's professional firefighters and
111 emergency medical workers; and be it further

112 RESOLVED, That the IAFF calls upon all
113 elected officials at every level of government to
114 understand that commitments made to professional
115 firefighters, paramedics, and the broader labor
116 movement must be honored, and that the IAFF will
117 hold accountable any official who breaks faith with
118 the men and women who protect their communities;
119 and be it further

120 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution shall
121 be sent to Governor Abigail Spanberger, the
122 members of the Virginia General Assembly, the
123 Democratic Governors Association, the Democratic
124 National Committee, and the Virginia AFL-CIO.

Submitted by: Virginia Professional Fire Fighters

Cost Estimate: **None**

Annual or Perpetual Designation: **N/A**

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt

CONVENTION ACTION: Adopted Unanimously, 8/12/26