

## PRESIDENT SIGNS HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY ACT.

President George W. Bush signed the Higher Education Opportunity Act on Thursday, August 14. This bill contains several important campus safety components, including the core provisions of the original Campus Fire Safety Right-to-Know Act. The Campus Fire Safety Right-to-Know Act was sponsored by Congressman Bill Pascrell and Senator Frank Lautenberg, both of New Jersey.

Blending the vital provisions of it into the larger Higher Education Act, allowed this important legislation to finally make its way to the White House and ultimately into law. This new law will require colleges to report fire safety information to the U.S. Department of Education.

Specific reporting details include:

- the number of fires and the cause of each fire
- the number of injuries and deaths related to a fire
- the value of property damage caused by a fire
- description of the fire protection equipment (alarms/sprinklers) in each on-campus housing unit
- the number of regular mandatory supervised fire drills;
- policies or rules on regarding fire safety education and training programs provided to students, faculty, and staff
- plans for future improvements in fire safety, if determined necessary by such institution.

The Center for Campus Fire Safety has been an active proponent of this important legislation since its inception more than eight years ago, when first introduced by Congressman Pascrell. CCFS believes that the components of the law, as intended, will help ensure America's college students, their parents and the public has uniform, valid and easy to understand information regarding fire safety.

CCFS has already initiated a dialogue with the United States Fire Administration, the US Department of Education and others, as work now shifts to the rulemaking phase. It is hoped that CCFS's federally funded, on-line fire reporting venture - part of the Firewise Campus Project ([www.firewisecampus.org](http://www.firewisecampus.org)) will become an integral component of this new, overall fire safety information collection operation.

Also included in the bill is a competitive matching grant program for campuses to fund safety and security initiatives, including emergency response protocol development and implementation. These grants will fund up to 50% of the cost of development of state-of-the-art emergency communication systems, safety and notification procedures following an emergency, measures to improve campus safety overall, and communications with local mental health and crisis response services.

The specific language as it relates to the fire safety reporting and the entire text of the Report of the Conference Committee can be downloaded from the [CCFS website](http://www.firewisecampus.org).



NYS Department of State

**OFFICE OF  
FIRE PREVENTION  
& CONTROL**

**phone** 518.474.6746  
**fax** 518.474.3240  
**email** [fire@dos.state.ny.us](mailto:fire@dos.state.ny.us)