

FIRE BRIGADES UNION

DEFEND CONTROL JOBS
AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

MATT WRACK
GENERAL SECRETARY



SOUTH WEST REGION, 158 MULLER ROAD, HORFIELD, BRISTOL BS7 9RE
Tel: 0117 9355132: Fax: 0117 9355916: E-mail: tam.mcfarlane@fbu.org.uk

Contact: Tam McFarlane, Executive Council Member

28th April 2011

MP
The House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear MP

REF: South West Firefighters express outrage and anger at attacks on pensions

I am writing to you in my position as the senior Official of The Fire Brigades Union within the South West Region. I want to leave you in no doubt as to the anger felt by Firefighters across the South West, including within your constituency, regarding the disgraceful attack on our pensions. The report of the Hutton commission on public sector pensions, if implemented, would mean increasing Firefighters retirement age, cutting their pension provision, and upping their pension contributions.

Firefighters believe these proposals to be totally unjust and see them as a further attack on their profession when they are already facing pay freezes and massive cuts. These proposals appear to ignore the points that Firefighters already pay up to 11% contributions and that Fire Service pensions underwent a major reform and "modernisation" only a few years ago.

I can inform you that Firefighters across the South West have been contacting the Union and expressing their opposition and condemnation of the attacks on our pensions which will mean that Firefighters will have to pay more, work longer and get less. There appears to be absolutely no recognition by the Government of the dangerous and physically demanding nature of a Firefighter's role or the massive personal financial contribution that our Members make towards their pension.

Firefighters' pensions have been reformed substantially as recently as 2006 and are already fair, sustainable and affordable. Subsequent changes in ill health provision have also achieved further savings in the scheme and the Union rejects as an insult and a myth any suggestion that Firefighters pensions are "gold plated".

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Firefighting is a very physical profession which is at the cutting edge of front line emergency services. Our Members put themselves at enormous risk to serve the public in the most dangerous of circumstances. Their pensions are not a privilege or a bonus; they are a very hard earned and necessary part of the profession. Despite this, the Government appears adamant that Firefighters hard earned pensions will be lost and our Members plans for the future will be destroyed.

I am asking you to give your support to the Firefighters within your constituency by urging the Government not to implement these damaging changes to our Members pensions. Such changes are detrimental and will have a negative impact not just on individuals but on the Fire Service as a whole.

Yours sincerely,

T MCFARLANE
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER
FBU SOUTH WEST

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