



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

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DRAFT

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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On March 14, 2007, the IAFF will host the first bi-partisan Presidential Forum of the 2008 election cycle. No other union – and very few organizations – has the credibility and respect to attract top-tier candidates from both political parties. The lineup of speakers who have agreed to participate in our Forum is truly a testament to our great union and the reputation we have built as a powerful political force and a coveted endorsement.

John Edwards, John McCain, Barack Obama, Chuck Hagel, Hillary Clinton, Chris Dodd, Joe Biden, Duncan Hunter and seven other candidates will make their case before the 1,000 delegates who will be attending the Forum and to our entire membership via same-day broadcast on our web site.

Early on, the IAFF made a decision to invite all serious candidates from both political parties – except one: former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

We made this decision after considerable soul-searching and close consultation with our two New York City affiliates, the Uniformed Firefighters Association Local 94 and the Uniformed Fire Officers Association Local 854, as well as our former Local 94 President and current IAFF 1st District Vice President covering New York.

The IAFF recognizes that Mayor Giuliani generally enjoys a favorable reputation as a result of his actions immediately after the tragedy of 9/11. As such, we want our affiliates and every one of our members to clearly understand the reason and rationale behind this very serious and sober decision.

Many people consider Rudy Giuliani “America’s Mayor,” and many of our members who don’t yet know the real story, may also have a positive view of him. This letter is intended to make all of our members aware of the egregious acts Mayor Giuliani committed against our members, our fallen on 9/11, and our New York City union officers following that horrific day.

Rest assured, our exclusion of Mayor Giuliani is not about any particular contractual or policy issue or disagreement, nor is it based on his unfriendly relationship with our New York City affiliates prior to 9/11 – which we will document and explain in additional correspondence later on during the campaign. In fact, we invited several candidates with whom we have had substantial disagreement on policy issues because we feel very strongly that our members have the right to hear from all candidates, not just those who tow the IAFF line.

Regrettably, the situation with former Mayor Giuliani is very different. His actions post 9/11 rise to such an offensive and personal attack on our brother and sisterhood – and directly on our union – that the IAFF does not feel Rudy Giuliani deserves an audience of IAFF leaders and members at our own Presidential Forum.

The disrespect that he exhibited to our 343 fallen FDNY brothers, their families and our New York City IAFF leadership in the wake of that tragic day has not been forgiven or forgotten.

In November 2001, our members were continuing the painful, but necessary, task of searching Ground Zero for the remains of our fallen brothers and the thousands of innocent citizens that were killed, because precious few of those who died in the terrorist attacks had been recovered at that point.

Prior to November 2001, 101 bodies or remains of fire fighters had been recovered. And those on the horrible pile at Ground Zero believed they had just found a spot in the rubble where they would find countless more that could be given proper burial.

Nevertheless, Giuliani, with the full support of his Fire Commissioner Thomas Von Essen, decided on November 2, 2001, to sharply reduce the number of those who could search for remains at any one time. There had been as many as 300 fire fighters at a time involved in search and recovery, but Giuliani cut that number to no more than 25 who could be there at once.

In conjunction with the cut in fire fighters allowed to search, Giuliani also made a conscious decision to institute a “scoop-and-dump” operation to expedite the clean-up of Ground Zero in lieu of the more time-consuming, but respectful, process of removing debris piece by piece in hope of uncovering more remains.

Mayor Giuliani’s actions meant that fire fighters and citizens who perished would either remain buried at Ground Zero forever, with no closure for families, or be removed like garbage and deposited at the Fresh Kills Landfill.

Our Local presidents at the time attempted to meet with the Mayor to stop this despicable treatment of those who perished, but he refused to even see them face-to-face.

The scoop-and-dump continued. And when hundreds of family members of the fallen joined with our affiliate leadership and members to protest Giuliani’s decision, he ordered senior officers of the New York Police Department to arrest 15 of our FDNY brothers, including a number of local elected IAFF leaders.

Giuliani modified his policy after the protest because public opinion was so strongly with our members. Ultimately, he was forced to put the fire fighters back on the pile. Our protests were later proven justified as more bodies were ultimately recovered and those families given a chance for some closure and a decent burial.

Giuliani argued that the change was for our own safety, but his argument was empty and without substance. Fire fighters had been on that pile since minutes after the twin towers fell – why all of a sudden, after nearly two months working on the pile, was Giuliani concerned about fire fighter safety?

In our view, he wasn’t really concerned. The fact is that the Mayor’s switch to a scoop-and-dump coincided with the final removal of tens of millions of dollars of gold, silver and other assets of the Bank of Nova Scotia that were buried beneath what was once the towers. Once the money was out, Giuliani sided with the developers that opposed a lengthy recovery effort, and ordered the scoop-and-dump operation so they could proceed with redevelopment.

In the first few days immediately after the disaster, Giuliani had said he was committed to the recovery of those lost “right down to the last brick.” We believed him at the time. But, what he proved with his actions is that he really meant the “last gold brick.”

Giuliani crucified fire fighters after our protest and publicly stated that our members were essentially acting like babies, that they didn’t have the market cornered on grief. His insensitive statements demonstrated his inability to grasp what members of the FDNY were experiencing.

What Giuliani showed is a disgraceful lack of respect for the fallen and those brothers still searching for them. He exposed our members and leaders to arrest. He valued the money and gold and wanted the site cleared before he left office at the end of 2001 more than he valued the lives and memories of those lost.

Our members deserved the right to continue with a full search for their lost brothers and other innocent victims. Proudly, as you know, the fire service has a code similar to the military, where we leave no one behind. Recovering even a piece of a turnout coat or helmet gave our FDNY brothers and sisters and the families of the fallen some small semblance of peace, something to honor. But hundreds remained entombed in Ground Zero when Giuliani gave up on them.

The fundamental lack of respect that Giuliani showed our FDNY members is unforgivable – and that’s why he was not invited. Our disdain for him is not about issues or a disputed contract, it is about a visceral, personal affront to the fallen, to our union and, indeed, to every one of us who has ever risked our lives by going into a burning building to save lives and property.

We have heard from some affiliates that Giuliani’s campaign is beginning to reach out to our locals, looking to build support. If you are contacted by Giuliani, Von Essen, or a representative of the Giuliani campaign, we hope you will say not just, “No,” but, “**Hell no.**” And please let the IAFF Political Affairs Department know about it by calling (202) 824-1582.

Please share this correspondence with your membership. Thank you.

Fraternally and Sincerely,

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