

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Vickie Pritchett

Phone: (615) 533-0305

2-23-09

**Common Voices Advocacy Group Recipients of  
Senator Paul S. Sarbanes Fire Safety Leadership Award**

Pleasant View, TN Feb. 23 – The Congressional Fire Service Institute and the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation have selected Common Voices for the Senator Paul S. Sarbanes Fire Service Safety Leadership Award. Named after retired-Senator Paul S. Sarbanes of Maryland, the award recognizes organizations for their outstanding contributions to firefighter health and safety. Sarbanes was a strong advocate of the nation's firefighters and rescue personnel during his 36-year career in Congress.

Common Voices is a non-profit group whose members are committed to preventing death and injury from fire. Six women who have been sharing their stories of personal loss are the primary spokespeople for the organization and focus on the life-saving role fire sprinklers play in preventing death. The group has visited Capitol Hill numerous times to meet with members of Congress to advocate for the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act. They testified during the ICC hearings last September when home fire sprinkler systems were added to the International Residential Code. They also travel across the country speaking to the fire service and decision makers and testify at code hearings to move forward fire sprinkler initiatives.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), there is a residential fire every 76 seconds resulting in more than 3,500 deaths each year. In addition to residential fire deaths, Common Voices address other fire risks including fires in public places of assembly such as the Station Nightclub fire where 100 people died in 2003, fire safety in nursing homes and assisted living facilities and campus fire deaths. Members of Common Voices believe the installation of fire sprinklers can help decrease our country's fire death statistics.

"We are extremely humbled and honored by this award, said Vickie Pritchett, Common Voices Facilitator. We are encouraged that our mission to create a Fire Safe America is recognized as attainable. We believe that our efforts are helpful to many fire service organizations, bringing the tragic statistics to life through our stories helps people understand, and most of all, to take action."

Common Voices, which was founded through support from the National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA) has worked with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, The Phoenix Society, Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition, Home Safety Council, International Association of Fire Chiefs, NFPA, Fire Team USA, IRC Fire Sprinkler Coalition, CFSI, USA Sprinkler Fitters, International Association of Firefighters, U.S. Fire Administration, National Volunteer Fire Council, ICC and the Center for Campus Fire

Safety.

“We extend our most sincere appreciation to our founders and to the organizations who collaborate with us to promote the life-saving technology of fire sprinklers,” adds Pritchett. “Our efforts are enhanced by partnering together to save lives – both citizens and firefighters.”

The award will be presented at the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual National Fire and Emergency Service Dinner, April 2, 2009 in Washington, DC. For more information about the Senator Paul S. Sarbanes Award, visit the CFSI Web site at [www.CFSI.org](http://www.CFSI.org). For more information about Common Voices, visit [www.FireAdvocates.org](http://www.FireAdvocates.org).

# # #