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## [H.R. 2795, First Responder Identification of Emergency Needs in Disaster Situations \(FRIENDS\) Act, as amended](#)

### FLOOR SITUATION

On Tuesday, December 8, 2015, the House will consider [H.R. 2795](#), *the First Responder Identification of Emergency Needs in Disaster Situations (FRIENDS) Act, as amended*, under suspension of the rules. H.R. 2795 was introduced on June 16, 2015 by Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) and was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security, which ordered the bill reported, as amended, by voice vote, on November 4, 2015.

### SUMMARY

H.R. 2795 requires the Government Accountability Office (GAO), within one year of enactment, to submit a report to Congress that describes state and local programs and policies related to the preparedness and protection of first responders. The report may include information on: the degree to which such programs and policies include consideration of the presence of a first responder's family in an area impacted by a terrorist attack; the availability of personal protective equipment for first responders; and, the availability of home medical kits for first responders and their families for biological incident response, as well as other factors. The bill also requires the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to consider the report's findings and assess its applicability for federal first responders.

### BACKGROUND

According to Chairman McCaul "each day, first responders save lives and enhance the overall resiliency of our Nation. However, the 9/11 terrorist attacks forever changed the role of our emergency response providers. Since that day, these brave men and women have been the first on the scene during the 2009 shooting at Fort Hood and the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, among others. These tragic events remind us of the critical role first responders play in the Nation's ability to react quickly, whether it be to a terrorist attack or natural disaster. Lessons learned from previous efforts are vital to increasing our ability to prepare for and respond to future incidents. We owe it to

these heroes and the American people to focus our efforts on doing all we can to ensure first responders are properly prepared for whatever catastrophe they encounter.”<sup>1</sup>

### **COST**

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) that implementing H.R. 2795 would cost about \$1 million over the 2016 to 2017 period; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds. Because enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or revenues, pay-as-you go procedures do not apply.

### **STAFF CONTACT**

For questions or further information please contact [Jerry White](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 5-0190.

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<sup>1</sup> See Chairman McCaul statement—“[The Critical Role of First Responders: Sharing Lessons Learned from Past Attacks](#),” June 18, 2014.