



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Senate Passes Volunteer Emergency Responder Employment Protection Bill

DAVID J. VALESKY May 25, 2010

| ISSUE: **FIREFIGHTERS**, **PARAMEDICS**

ALBANY, N.Y.— Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) applauded the State Senate's passage of legislation that will protect volunteer emergency responders from being terminated from their paid employment for missing work time due to performing those duties. The bill passed with unanimous bipartisan support, which speaks to the strength of the bill.

"Legislation like this allows us to protect the jobs of our hardworking volunteer responders, so that they can continue to protect our communities," said Senator Valesky.

The Senate bill (S4988) dictates that if an employee is absent from, or late to, his/her employment due to engaging in the performance of his/her emergency response duties, an employer cannot terminate solely for this reason.

"Over 80 percent of our state is protected by volunteer emergency responders. We rely heavily on these brave individuals to protect the communities in which we live in. They should not be punished by an employer for protecting our friends, families, and business partners," said Senator Valesky.

Employers are expected to grant at least three hours of authorized absence in any twelve month period to volunteers. In addition, responders will be expected to show proof of their emergency duties upon request of an employer through a written statement by their commanding officer.

With this legislation, New York will join eight other states across the nation that have similar laws protecting the jobs of volunteer emergency responders.

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