



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

## **Bill Extending Health Benefits for Volunteer Firefighters Signed by Governor Paterson**

David J. Valesky

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ALBANY, N.Y.— Governor David Paterson signed legislation sponsored by Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) that will extend cardiovascular health benefits for volunteer firefighters an additional five years (S.2769A).

“Everyday volunteer firefighters across New York put their lives on the line to protect our communities,” said Senator David Valesky. “Extending their benefits enables them to continue to protect the places they live, without compensating their health coverage.”

According to the law, firefighters stricken with heart problems while performing their duty are allowed to claim benefits unless substantial evidence is given that their activity as a firefighter did not cause the heart disease.

Since 1977, when this particular benefit was established, it has been possible that it could simply expire and disappear, traditionally it has been extended every two years. However, the new legislation would expand coverage until 2015 for volunteer firefighters.

David Jacobowitz, 1st Vice President of the Firemen's Association of the State of New York praised the work of Senator David Valesky and Assemblyman Magee in shepherding this bill through the NYS Legislature and said, "FASNY is indebted to Senator David Valesky and Assemblyman Bill Magee for making this happen. All too frequently the risks taken by volunteers are absorbed by daily routine and forgotten. This legislation insures that those that are injured or die are not forgotten."

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