



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Grisanti

## Grisanti's Legislation Giving Volunteer Firefighters, Ambulance Squad Members Authorized Absences Signed Into Law

MARK GRISANTI October 1, 2014

| ISSUE: **FIREFIGHTERS**



Senator Mark Grisanti (R, I-60) today announced a bill he sponsored that supports the dedicated work by volunteer firefighters and first responders throughout the state, including Western New York, has been signed into law.

Senate Bill S7111 changes the labor law to allow authorized absences for members of volunteer fire departments and volunteer ambulance squads when they are called to respond to a state of emergency declared by either the federal or state government.

"I am pleased this legislation has been signed into law as it will protect those who serve as volunteer firefighters and ambulance squad members," said Senator Grisanti. "The brave men and women who assist their community in times of distress will now be protected in their jobs when they answer the call of duty. New York State has experienced natural and manmade disasters from hurricanes to snowstorms to terrorist attacks."

The bill prohibits employers from requiring employees to use their excused absences (vacation, sick time, personal days off) when responding to a state of emergency. The employee must provide the employer with a statement from the chief of the volunteer firefighter department or head of the volunteer ambulance squad defining the period of time that the employee was called on to respond to the state of emergency.

"Our first responders are essential to the search and rescue of victims," said Senator Grisanti. "Volunteering of one's time should be supported, not punished or discouraged. This law makes it easier for brave men and women who want to serve our community take a leave of absence from their jobs to provide help to those who are in need."