



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin J. Golden

Senate Passes Bills to Strengthen Penalties for Crimes Against Firefighters and Retired Police

Martin J. Golden

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The New York State Senate today passed two bills to protect the first responders and law enforcement professionals who protect our communities. The bills would strengthen penalties for individuals who obstruct critical medical emergencies or assault retired police officers in acts of revenge.

Bill S2977, sponsored by Senator Rich Funke (R-C-I, Fairport), would make it a crime to intentionally obstruct a firefighter performing emergency medical care on a sick or injured person. Current law affords firefighters special protections while engaged in a variety of functions during the performance of their official duties. However, the law does not adequately protect firefighters performing emergency medical care.

In one incident, the City of Rochester Fire Department responded to a call and began delivering emergency medical care for a victim when an uninvolved onlooker became agitated and physically attacked firefighters on scene. Despite the egregious nature of the incident, the assailant could not be charged under existing

law protecting firefighters.

Senator Funke said, “Firefighters put their lives on the line in many ways during the course of their official duties and they deserve to be protected no matter what type of work they are engaged in. Whether it’s a fire, accident, or medical emergency, firefighters are always there to keep us safe and I’m proud this legislation ensures the law is on their side to keep them safe as well. I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their support of this legislation and I look forward to seeing Majority Leader Morelle’s bill move forward in the Assembly.”

The Senate passed another bill (S1827), sponsored by Senator Martin Golden (R-C-I, Brooklyn), to protect retired police officers by strengthening the penalties for crimes committed by individuals seeking retaliation for being previously arrested by the officer. The measure would make such retaliatory crimes a class B or C violent felony, depending on the extent of the assault, and offer the same protection that the law currently gives active police officers to help discourage felons from seeking revenge against retired officers.

Senator Golden, a former New York City Police Officer stated, “There is no question that our laws must protect our law enforcement personnel from their first day on the job through the end of their retirement. Once a police officer, always a police officer, and this legislation will guarantee that the personal safety of our men and women in uniform is never threatened. I am hopeful that my colleagues in the State Assembly will adopt this legislation to protect our police officers who work to keep us safe from possible assault from someone they had previously arrested.”

The bills have been sent to the Assembly.