



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo Legislation to Provide Legacy Credits for Step-Children & Other Non-Biological Children of Deceased 9-11 First Responders Approved by New York State Senate

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR June 15, 2015

| ISSUE: **FAMILY, TERRORISM**

Queens, NY (June 15, 2015): NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. is applauding the State Senate passage of a bill (S.3604) he sponsors that would enable step-children and other non-biological children raised by deceased 9-11 first responders to become eligible for “legacy credits” on competitive civil service exams. Addabbo credits a constituent for bringing the issue to his attention and working with him to promote the bill's passage.

“Several years ago, New York State sought to honor the memories of first responders who died as a result of the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks by providing their surviving children and siblings with an additional 10 points on competitive civil service exams,” said Addabbo. “Many of these children and other relatives of firefighters, police officers, EMTs, paramedics and others who perished as a direct result of the attacks – whether at the scene or from subsequent related health issues – often wish to follow in the footsteps of the people they lost and pursue a civil service career. But the initial legacy credit law inadvertently left out a number of other loved ones of first responders who died, and my legislation is an effort to address a specific deficiency.”

Under Addabbo's bill, the stepchildren or children of surviving spouses of deceased first responders who were not legally adopted or their biological offspring would become eligible for the extra points on civil service exams. "For many of these children, the moms or dads they tragically lost as a result of the 9-11 attacks and their aftermath were the only moms or dads they ever knew – regardless of whether they were related by blood," said Addabbo. "These children were forced to say good-bye to parents who cared for them, raised them, supported them financially, and loved them. That these men and women were not the biological parents of these children did not prevent them from being loving families and feeling as much loss as any other sons and daughters of 9-11 heroes and heroines."

A local advocate who has worked diligently with Addabbo to move this legislation forward, Joan Abruzzino-York, lost her firefighter husband, Ray York, as a result of the September 11th attacks, and is hoping her son, Robert, will soon have the opportunity to follow in his step-father's footsteps with the help of the legacy credit program.

"It's easy to say the words 'never forget,' but Senator Addabbo has not just said those words. He has proven with his actions that the sacrifice my husband made on 9-11 is truly not forgotten," she said. "We are grateful to him and the Senate for passing the bill. We are hoping that the Assembly will do the same so that Robert can fulfill his dream of becoming a firefighter and carrying on his dad's work."

In the Assembly, Queens Assemblyman Mike Miller – the sponsor in that house – is pushing for passage of the bill, which is under consideration by the Committee on Governmental Employees.

"Sometimes, the definition of family is much bigger and more complex than the law officially

recognizes,” said Addabbo. “This legislation will help to ensure that additional children who suffered the loss of a parent as a result of the terrorist attacks 14 years ago will have a greater opportunity to enter public service – whether as first responders themselves, or in other civil service capacities.”

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