



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Volunteer First Responders Get Support from Senator Young

CATHARINE YOUNG June 16, 2015

| ISSUE: **SUNY (STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK), HIGHER EDUCATION, FIREFIGHTERS, PROPERTY TAX, INCOME TAX**

Legislation expresses appreciation for volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians

ALBANY – In communities across Western New York and beyond, volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians serve on the front lines of public safety, answering the sound of the alarm, in response to fire, medical emergency or natural disaster.

In recognition of this selfless sacrifice to our communities, Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – Olean) and her colleagues recently passed several measures to provide additional tax and education benefits to those who serve.

“Our volunteer fire departments are made up of courageous men and women who put their lives on hold when others need it most. No matter the hour or the task, our volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers answer the call and put their lives on the line, expecting nothing in return. They are often taken from their families, their jobs and their free time,

sometimes not knowing what awaits them when they arrive at a scene,” said Senator Young.

Senate bill 1000A, co-sponsored by Senator Young, establishes a cost-of-living adjustment, based on the Consumer Price Index, for a volunteer firefighter who is permanently disabled as a result of their service. Currently, volunteer responders who are injured in the course of their duties to the community are only eligible to receive worker’s compensation benefits up to \$400 per week.

Senate bill 2727 expands the tax credits for volunteer firefighters and emergency medical responders, allowing them to receive up to a \$200 tax credit on their personal income taxes and up to a \$3,000 reduction off the assessed value of their home for their property tax bill.

“I am extremely proud of all of our firefighters and EMTs in Western New York. They give unselfishly of their time and are the true definition of heroes. By allowing them to receive a small tax break we can show them how much we appreciate their service and sacrifice,” Senator Young said.

Senate bill 3126 allows community colleges and State University of New York (SUNY) schools to implement programs that provide academic credit for successful completion of a service learning, internship, or independent study program through a volunteer fire service. The bill would help communities who face a significant shortage of volunteer responders by providing educational incentive for young people to join the fire and ambulance corps.

