



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

## Senator Bonacic Supports Legislation Giving Volunteer Firefighters Access to Critical Health Benefits

JOHN J. BONACIC April 13, 2016

| ISSUE: **VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**



(**Middletown, NY**)-The New York State Senate this week passed legislation to extend critical benefits to volunteer firefighters as they risk their health and safety to protect others. The bill, [S.3891](#), which Senator Bonacic was proud to co-sponsor, amends the Volunteer Firefighters' Benefit Law to provide heightened levels of protections for firefighters that contract certain cancer-related diseases while serving as volunteers.

“Our local volunteer firefighters put their lives on the line everyday protecting our communities,” said Senator Bonacic. “I was proud to co-sponsor their legislation, and vote in favor of it, because it will provide necessary protections for these courageous first responders. I would urge my colleagues in the Assembly to pass this bill as soon as possible.”

This bill would provide presumptive cancer coverage to thousands of volunteer firefighters in New York. An increased number of firefighters are being diagnosed with cancer and recent medical studies have concluded that they are at a significantly higher risk for many types of cancer than the general population. This is due to the high levels of carcinogens and other toxins found in burning buildings and the other hazardous environments that firefighters routinely work in.

This bill will be sent to the Assembly.

In addition to this measure, the Senate was also able to recently secure \$250,000 as part of the enacted 2016-17 State Budget to support the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. This funding will help increase the number of volunteer firefighters through promotional materials, public service announcements, and other tools that highlight the importance of promoting public safety and protecting local communities.