



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo Votes to Approve Legislation Expanding Death and Disability Benefits for Volunteer Firefighters

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. May 9, 2016

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Howard Beach, NY (May 9, 2016) To underscore the serious physical dangers routinely faced by volunteer firefighters, Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. recently joined with his Senate colleagues in approving legislation (S.3891) that would expand death and disability benefits to cover a variety of cancers these brave men and women may contract as a result of their duties.

“I have an immense respect for volunteer firefighters throughout the state and especially for those working out of the five in my district,” said Addabbo. “While current state law presumes that lung disease is associated with smoke inhalation and other risks associated with volunteer firefighting activities, it doesn’t acknowledge that certain cancers may also result from this dangerous work. Under this bill, cancer that develops in firefighters who showed no signs of the illness when passing their volunteer physicals will more routinely be viewed as related to their firefighting duties. This will enable volunteers who become ill with cancer to more easily seek partial and full disability benefits for themselves, as well as open the door to potential death benefits for their surviving families.”

Under the legislation, the cancers covered would include melanoma and cancers affecting the lymphatic, digestive, hematological, urinary, prostate, neurological, breast and

reproductive systems. Unless proven otherwise by insurance carriers, these diseases would be presumed to be caused by the volunteer's normal firefighting activities. To seek death benefits or total, partial, temporary or permanent disability benefits, volunteers ultimately diagnosed with cancer must not demonstrate any signs of the illness during their pre-firefighting physicals for acceptance into their fire companies.

"Our volunteer firefighters routinely place themselves in mortal danger on our behalf: running into flames, and literally risking life and limb to keep all of us safe from harm and our homes and businesses standing," Addabbo said. "When these courageous men and women become ill from cancer or pass away as a result of their selfless volunteer activities, we should be there for them and for their families. This proposal recognizes the extraordinary dangers faced by our volunteers and seeks to underscore how much their service and dedication means to all of our communities."

Having passed the Senate, the bill is now under review by the Assembly Committee on Local Governments. It would need to be approved by the Assembly and Governor to become law.