



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

Senator Phillips Votes To Expand Health Protections For Volunteer Firefighters

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Senator Elaine Phillips (R-Manhasset) recently voted in favor of legislation to provide additional healthcare benefits to volunteer firefighters battling serious illness resulting from the hazards they encounter in the line of duty. The legislation, passed by the Senate, expands the benefits available to volunteer firefighters when they develop certain cancers as a result of their service.

“Volunteer firefighters put themselves in harm’s way every single day protecting our communities. Exposure to the toxic smoke and harmful substances they encounter every time they fight a fire greatly increases their risk of developing cancer. Ensuring they have access to the care they need if they get sick is the right thing to do,” said Senator Phillips.

Overexposure to smoke increases the risk of contracting cancer of the lungs, but may also cause cancer in an individual's esophagus, stomach, blood, intestines, and even the brain. A National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) study suggests firefighters are at higher risk of cancers of the digestive, oral, respiratory, and urinary systems when compared to the general population.

This legislation expands the existing coverage available under the Volunteer Firefighters Benefit Law to include cancer of the digestive, hematological, lymphatic, urinary, prostate, neurological, breast and reproductive systems or melanoma. Paid firefighters already receive these protections.

The legislation has been sent to the Assembly.