



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

## Sen. Helming Announces Signing of Bill for Volunteer Fire Departments

[JONATHAN MONFILETTO - 315-568-9816](#) July 27, 2017

Senator Pamela A. Helming (R,C,I-Canandaigua) today announced that Governor Andrew Cuomo signed legislation that she sponsored to allow paid and volunteer firefighters from other states to assist volunteer fire departments in New York State. The bill, S.6415, passed nearly unanimously in both the Senate and Assembly during this year's legislative session, and with the Governor's signature, it has become law after several years of effort in the State Legislature.

Many volunteer fire departments around New York State – especially in small, rural areas – already struggle with recruiting members and maintaining sufficient numbers, and significant, temporary increases in population during the summertime in these areas causes a higher demand for emergency services. At the same time, many individuals who visit these areas – often residing in New York State temporarily for several months during the tourist season – are trained and serve as firefighters in other states. By allowing these individuals who are members of fire departments in their home states to serve with volunteer fire departments in New York State, these volunteer fire departments can augment their membership during a critical time of the year.

Prior to this bill becoming law, in-state firefighters were already allowed to volunteer in fire districts outside of the ones in which they live. This legislation allows municipalities to extend the same permissions to firefighters who live out-of-state but temporarily reside in New York State, such as for a second home or military service. These out-of-state firefighters must still meet any state and local requirements in order to serve, such as a background check and appropriate training. Volunteer fire departments must also provide these firefighters with several of the same benefits under the Volunteer Firefighters' Benefit Law that regular active members receive, excluding service award programs and presumptive health coverage, which would continue to be the responsibility of the volunteer's out-of-state district.

"Our volunteer fire departments throughout New York State do an absolutely tremendous job serving and protecting our communities when help is most needed during an emergency. Allowing people who are trained as firefighters to serve in volunteer fire departments when they are visiting the area just makes sense because it boosts volunteer membership at a time of the year when emergency calls rise and does so with highly trained individuals. I thank my colleagues in the Senate as well as the Assembly for supporting this measure, and I thank Governor Cuomo for signing it into law after several years of consideration," Senator Helming said.

*Senator Helming represents the 54<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which consists of Seneca and Wayne Counties, parts of Cayuga and Ontario Counties, and the towns of Lansing and Webster. For more information, please visit Senator Helming's [website](#), or follow @SenatorHelming on Facebook or Twitter.*

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