



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael H. Ranzenhofer

Legislation Would Further Protect Volunteer Firefighters

SENATOR MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER October 18, 2017

| ISSUE: **VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**

Look for...

Senator Mike Ranzenhofer's
Monthly Column

...In your local newspaper
the third week of every month

Senator Ranzenhofer's column appeared in the Amherst and Clarence Bees on October 18th

Last month, I joined volunteer firefighters and cancer survivors, at Hutchinson Hose Company Station Two, to call on Governor Cuomo to sign legislation (S1411B) that would expand medical coverage of certain cancers caused by hazards while protecting our communities.

Our volunteer firefighters play a vital role in our community. They are extremely dedicated, working tirelessly to protect and serve our residents, children and families. Firefighting is

considered one of the most dangerous jobs, and our volunteer firefighters risk their lives every day.

Many dangers are associated with volunteering as a firefighter, from explosions to collapsing buildings. According to medical professionals, a mask, protective gear and other safeguards may not be able to fully protect the health of our volunteer firefighters.

Exposure to smoke, chemicals and known carcinogens are some of the many hazards encountered while on the job. Almost every home now has multiple electronic devices—mobile phones, computers and televisions— that release dangerous carcinogens during a fire. All of these dangers continue to exist even after the fire has been extinguished.

In 2013, the National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health analyzed the health of 30,000 firefighters from three large cities, and another study two years later examined firefighters in California's Cancer Registry. Both studies determined, and numerous other studies confirmed, increased rates of cancer among firefighters when compared to the general population. Unfortunately, firefighters are at a greater risk for many types of cancer.

Our firefighters volunteered to serve and protect our communities, not to get cancer. They answered a call of service with no pay and minimal benefits. Currently, they are forced to pay out of their own pockets for expenses associated with a cancer diagnosis and treatment. This causes tremendous financial and emotional stress for firefighters and their families.

This legislation would expand existing coverage, available under the Volunteer Firefighters Benefit Law, to include cancers of the digestive, hematological, lymphatic, urinary, prostate, neurological, breast and reproductive systems.

Most importantly, this legislation would prevent families of firefighters from facing financial hardship. Instead, it would provide some level of comfort and assistance to family members

dealing with cancer.

In June, I voted in favor of the legislation when it passed the State Senate, and the State Assembly approved the measure as well. The Firemen's Association of the State of New York is supporting the bill.

I encourage you to join me in backing this important legislation by writing, calling or e-mailing Governor Cuomo to let him know that you support it too. I am hopeful and optimistic that it will be signed into law before the end of this year.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2017-S1411B

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to the New York state volunteer firefighter gap coverage cancer disability benefits act

January 09, 2017

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Joseph A. Griffo**

Do you support this bill?