



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara applauds approval of legislation giving volunteer firefighters access to critical health care benefits: O'Mara co-sponsors measure giving volunteer firefighters coverage for job-related cancer diagnoses

THOMAS F. O'MARA October 23, 2017

| ISSUE: **VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**



Our volunteer firefighters make great sacrifices to protect the health, safety and well-being of lives and property throughout our communities.

**Albany, N.Y., October 22**—Legislation co-sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) to extend critical health care benefits to volunteer firefighters by ensuring expanded levels

of protection for firefighters stricken with cancer attributable to their service as volunteers has been signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

“Our volunteer firefighters make great sacrifices to protect the health, safety and well-being of lives and property throughout our communities. They deserve and they’ve earned the health care coverage this new law provides,” said O’Mara. “It’s the least we can do for our volunteer firefighters and their families.”

The legislation (**S.1411/A711, Chapter 334 of the Laws of 2017**) expands the Volunteer Firefighters’ Benefit Law to provide presumptive cancer coverage to New York’s more than 100,000 volunteer firefighters.

The number of firefighters diagnosed with cancer has steadily increased over the past decade. Recent medical studies have concluded that firefighters are at a significantly higher risk for many types of cancers than the general population because they are exposed to higher levels of carcinogens and other toxins in burning buildings and the other hazardous environments they routinely encounter.