



NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

June 8, 2017

The Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Speaker Heastie:

We are respectfully requesting your support of the "Community Heroes Protection Act," S1114A (Akshar) /A2962A (Abbate). This legislation passed the New York State Senate overwhelmingly with a vote of 54-8 and is currently sitting in the Assembly Codes Committee. As former members of law enforcement and colleagues to many of our local first responders, it is our hope to see this legislation pass in both houses and be delivered to the Governor before the end of the 2017 Legislative Session.

This much-needed legislation intends to support our brave first responders, such as police officers, firefighters, corrections officers, and emergency medical technicians, who devote their lives every day to protecting and serving the people of the great state of New York. Researchers have found that between 2015 and 2016, there was a 68% increase in firearms-related fatalities among law enforcement. In numerous studies across the country, analysts have found that law enforcement officers are not the only first responders being violently targeted. In New York alone, areas such as Cape Vincent and Webster have seen Community Heroes like EMTs, Firefighters, and 911 Dispatchers injured or killed in numerous ambush-style acts of violence.

If enacted, the "Community Heroes Protection Act" would designate offenses aimed at first responders specifically because of their job and uniform as a "hate crime." In current law, when a person is convicted of a hate crime and the specified offense is a misdemeanor or a class C, D or E felony, the hate crime shall be deemed to be one category higher than the specified offense or one category higher than the offense level applicable to the defendant's conviction.

In the Senate, this bill has 25 co-sponsors and 14 co-sponsors in the Assembly. Other states around the nation such as California, Delaware, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, and South Carolina are carrying this type of legislation.

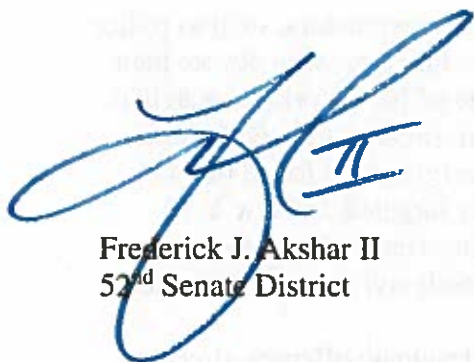
Beyond the state and nation-wide legislatures, this bill is strongly supported by various groups around the state such as: the Fireman's Association of the State of New York (FASNY), The New York State Sheriffs' Association, The International Union of Police Associations AFL-CIO, Communities United for Police Reform Action Fund, and the New York State Building Officials Conference (NYSBOC).

On January 30, 2017, we stood with our colleagues in the Senate and Assembly with many groups around the state to express our support for this bill. Of those in attendance, I can proudly say that the New York State Troopers Police Benevolent Association, New York State Association of Chiefs of Police, Uniformed EMS Officers Union of FDNY, Fire Department of New York Emergency Medical Services, New York State Correctional Officers and Police Benevolent Association, New York State Association of Fire Chiefs, United Firefighters Association, and Suffolk County Correction Officers Associations, all shared their support. To illustrate the importance of this legislation, Assemblywoman Pamela Harris, a retired corrections officer, shared the harrowing story of the brutal attack she suffered at the hands of an inmate while on duty at Rikers Island.

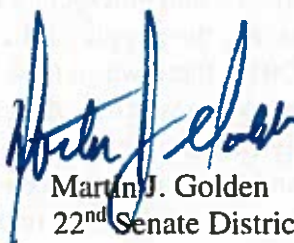
Make no mistake, the passage of stiffer penalties will not single-handedly protect all of our emergency service workers, nor will it mend all relationships between those who serve the public and the public whom they serve. It is our obligation as public officials to protect those who protect us.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

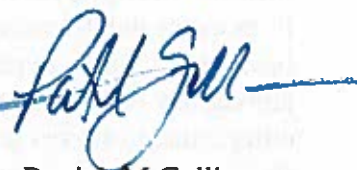
Sincerely,



Frederick J. Akshar II
52nd Senate District



Martin J. Golden
22nd Senate District



Patrick M. Gallivan
59th Senate District

Cc:

Temporary President and Majority Leader, John Flanagan

Counsel to the Senate Majority, Elizabeth Garvey

Executive Counsel to the Speaker, Howard Vargas

Legislative Counsel to the Speaker, Kathleen O'Keefe

Assemblyman Peter Abbate, Jr.

Assemblyman Joseph Lentol