



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

New York State Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt, Assemblyman Paul Bologna, Angelo Morinello, and County Leaders Discuss Legislative Package That Would Benefit Volunteer Fire Departments

ROBERT G. ORTT February 7, 2025

| ISSUE: **VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS, EMERGENCY SERVICES, EMS**



Wilson, NY - Today, standing with members of the Western New York Delegation, County officials, and volunteer firefighters, New York State Senator Rob Ortt highlighted a package of legislation aimed at bolstering recruitment in local volunteer fire departments and emergency medical services.

A recent blaze at a grocery store in the Village of Wilson highlighted an issue volunteer fire departments across New York are facing - a lack of members. Luckily, nobody was hurt, but the Wilson Volunteer fire department didn't have enough manpower to contain the flames – They had to call for backup, which came from several nearby fire halls.

“I meet with dozens of volunteer firefighters throughout my district and they all tell me the same thing - they need more help,” said Senator Rob Ortt. “With the start of a new legislative session, I am proud to once again support the brave men and women that keep our communities safe by re-introducing a package of bills aimed at boosting volunteer membership at departments across the state.”

“New York Volunteer Firefighters help save New York taxpayers an estimated \$4.7 billion per year. This figure does not include the value of services provided by volunteer emergency medical providers. Each year it becomes increasingly difficult to fill the ranks of these brave first responders. I am proud to co-sponsor in the Assembly Senator Ortt's package of legislation aimed at bolstering recruitment in local volunteer fire departments and emergency medical services,” said Assemblyman Angelo Morinello.

"While volunteer fire companies across the state are struggling with recruitment and retention, our rural communities face particular challenges. After the devastating fire in Wilson last week, we are seeing firsthand the need for more volunteers. We are at a critical juncture in rural areas across New York State and it is our responsibility to create solutions that support our Volunteer Fire Companies, and more importantly, help bolster membership and recruitment efforts so that when the siren rings there are more than enough people to answer the call. I am proud to support a package of legislation that works toward finding these solutions. Our first responders play such a vital role in our communities, and it is important that we do all we can to support their needs," said Assemblyman Paul Bologna.

“Right now, Western New York is experiencing a drastic shortage of volunteer firefighters. This is unacceptable,” said Hawley. “As a Life Member of the Stafford Volunteer Fire Department, I know firsthand the importance these departments play in the safety of our community. I’m proud to have been able to work alongside Senator Ortt to support initiatives that would extend free tuition benefits for volunteer firefighters, create tax credits for volunteer members and establish a mileage reimbursement program for these much-needed positions. I will continue to work alongside my colleagues in the state Assembly and Senate to support our local volunteer fire departments and keep our communities safe,” said Assemblyman Steve Hawley.

Legislation:

S2314 - Extends tuition free course benefits to volunteer firefighters or volunteer ambulance workers

S2720 - Creates a wage tax credit for employers who employ New York national guard members, reservists, volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel

S3527 - Relates to enacting the volunteer emergency services mileage reimbursement tax credit

S3529 - Relates to volunteer members of village fire companies

S2008 - Authorizes municipalities to fund training of firefighters; allows a municipality to recoup the cost of sending a firefighter to training school from another municipality that hires that firefighter within three years of their training.

The proposed bills are currently in committee.

2025-S2720

- 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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Creates a wage tax credit for employers who employ New York national guard members, reservists, volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel

January 22, 2025

In Senate Committee [Budget and Revenue](#)

Sponsored by [Robert G. Ort](#)

Do you support this bill?

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