



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Grisanti

Senator Grisanti sponsors legislation giving emergency responders authorized absences for emergencies

MARK GRISANTI March 21, 2012

| ISSUE: **FIREFIGHTERS, PARAMEDICS**



Senator Mark Grisanti recently passed the Senate version of an Assembly bill that will change the labor law to make it an authorized absence for members of the volunteer fire department and volunteer ambulance squads when they respond to a state of emergency declared by the federal or state government.

Employers will not be able to charge the time to vacation, sick leave or other excused absences. The employee must provide the employer with a statement from the head of the volunteer firefighter department or volunteer ambulance squad defining the applicable period of time that the employee was called on to respond to the state of emergency.

“I am pleased to sponsor and pass this piece of legislation to protect our volunteer firefighters and ambulance squads. The good men and women who volunteer to assist their community in times of distress will now be protected in their jobs when they answer the call of duty,” said Senator Grisanti. “New York has experienced natural and man made disasters from hurricanes to snowstorms to terrorism. Each time our first responders have been essential to the search and rescue of victims. The volunteering of one’s time should not be punished or discouraged. We hope this law will make it easier for those with the will and skill to help to take leaves from their day jobs to assist us in our time of need.”

Since 1954, the state of New York has asked FEMA to declare almost 60 major disaster declarations for everything from snowstorms to earthquakes to ice storms. In 2011, New York was hit by Tropical Storm Lee, Hurricane Irene, flooding, tornadoes, snowstorms, and straight-line winds.