



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

## Senator Bonacic Announces Bill Allowing Volunteer Fire Departments to Screen Potential Members for Past Sex Offenses Passes in the Senate

JOHN J. BONACIC June 17, 2014

| ISSUE: **FIREFIGHTERS**

Senator John Bonacic (R/I/C – Mount Hope) announces that the NYS Senate today passed Senate Bill 1885-C which would require prospective volunteer firefighters to authorize a background check for sex offense convictions upon the submission of their application.

The bill would also allow individual fire companies to determine if the prospective volunteer shall be eligible to become a volunteer member of the fire company if a sex offense is found.

“Volunteer fire department personnel should have all the means necessary to keep convicted sex offenders from becoming volunteers,” said Senator Bonacic. “Oftentimes, volunteer firefighters are in situations where children and families are present whether in the actions of a fire or medical emergency, but they also take part in community and school events. This law will give those that approve new volunteer firefighters the support they need.”

The bill also allows departments to screen current volunteers for sexual offense convictions, to terminate any with a conviction for sexual offenses, and shield municipalities with volunteer fire departments from potential lawsuits should there be an incident involving a volunteer with a past sex offense conviction.

This bill was passed in the Senate and the Assembly, and now it will go to the Governor.

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