



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Ortt, Senate Pass Bill Expanding Critical Health Benefits for Volunteer Firefighters

ANTOINETTE DELBEL April 12, 2016

| ISSUE: **VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**



ALBANY – Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I – North Tonawanda) today announced the New York State Senate passed legislation on Monday that would provide volunteer firefighters with more health benefits as they continue to put their lives on the line to protect others. The bill (S3891) amends the Volunteer Firefighters' Benefit Law to extend levels of protections for volunteer firefighters that develop certain cancer related diseases while on the job.

Senator Ortt said, “Volunteer firefighters provide an invaluable service across our state and especially here in Western New York. In the vast majority of my rural district, these selfless men and women are the first responders when emergency strikes. This legislation acknowledges the health risks they face and justly offers them the protections they deserve.”

City Captain of North Tonawanda Vol. Firefighters and Pres. of Sweeney Hose Fire Co. #7 Joe Lavey Jr. said, “There are many times when volunteer firefighters put their lives in danger to keep others safe. There are currently 63 volunteer firefighters in the City of North Tonawanda – that’s 63 men and women who I know would be able to breathe a huge sigh of relief if this bill were to become law. We’re grateful to Senator Ortt for his previous legislation in support of volunteer firefighters across the state.”

There are more than 100,000 volunteer firefighters statewide that would have presumptive cancer coverage as a result of this legislation. The number of firefighters diagnosed with cancer has increased in recent years, and medical studies have shown that they are at a significantly higher risk for various types of cancer than the general population. Increased cancer risks are linked to the high levels of carcinogens and other toxins from building fires and other hazardous settings where firefighters serve.

The bill is being sent to the Assembly.

This measure for volunteer firefighters is in addition to the \$250,000 the State Senate recently secured as part of the enacted 2016-17 State Budget to support the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. The funding will help to address the shortage of volunteer firefighters throughout the state by using promotional tools to highlight the importance of protecting local neighborhoods and enforcing public safety. The money will be used for promotional materials, public service announcements, and other tools in an effort to bolster the number of volunteers.

2015-S3891

- 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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Expands the coverage to include cancer of the digestive, hematological, lymphatic, urinary, prostate, neurological, breast and reproductive systems

February 20, 2015

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Michael F. Nozzolio**

Do you support this bill?

NAY