



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## Senate-approved legislation would ensure volunteer firefighters access to critical health care benefits ~ Read more

THOMAS F. O'MARA April 18, 2016

| ISSUE: **VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**



O'Mara co-sponsors measure giving volunteer firefighters coverage for job-related cancer diagnoses

**Albany, N.Y., April 18**— The New York State Senate has approved legislation co-sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) to extend critical health care benefits to volunteer firefighters by ensuring expanded levels of protection for firefighters stricken with cancer attributable to their service as volunteers.

“Our volunteer firefighters make great sacrifices to protect the health, safety and well-being of lives and property throughout our communities. They deserve and they’ve earned the health care coverage this legislation would provide,” said O’Mara. “It’s the least we can do for our volunteer firefighters and their families.”

The legislation ([S3891/A5518](#)) would expand the Volunteer Firefighters’ Benefit Law to provide presumptive cancer coverage to New York’s more than 100,000 volunteer firefighters. Increasing numbers of firefighters are being diagnosed with cancer and recent medical studies have concluded that they are at a significantly higher risk for many types of cancers than the general population because of the high levels of carcinogens and other toxins they’re exposed to in burning buildings and the other hazardous environments that firefighters routinely encounter.

The measure has bipartisan support in the Legislature, where it’s sponsored by Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther (D,I,WF-Forestburgh). It’s been referred the Assembly Local Governments Committee.

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