



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

## Senator Bonacic Supports Community Heroes Protection Act: Legislation that Would Increase Penalties on Individuals who Target First Responders

JOHN J. BONACIC May 9, 2017

| ISSUE: **FIRST RESPONDERS**



(Albany, NY)- State Senator John J. Bonacic (R/C/I-Mt. Hope) voted in favor of legislation today that would increase penalties on individuals who target first responders. The bill (S1114A) which Senator Bonacic co-sponsors, is known as the “Community Heroes Protection Act,” and would make crimes explicitly committed against law enforcement and first responders punishable as hate crimes.

The Community Heroes Protection Act classifies certain crimes against first responders, such as law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency medical services personnel as hate crimes. These offenses are designated as hate crimes only if they are intentionally aimed at first responders based on the uniform they are wearing.

In current law, when a person is convicted of a hate crime and the specified offense is a misdemeanor or a class C, D, or E felony, the hate crime shall be deemed to be one category higher than the specified offense or one category higher than the offense level applicable to the defendant's conviction. Police officers and first responders are not included as victims in the current definition of a hate crime.

"Our first responders are under attack and this legislation will make people think twice before trying to hurt one of them," said Senator Bonacic. "These brave men and women put their lives on the line every day and it is incumbent upon us as lawmakers to do what we can to protect them. I urge the Assembly to follow the Senate's lead and pass this bill quickly"

The bill's passage today coincides with the annual Police Officers Memorial Ceremony to recognize police officers of New York State who died in the line of duty. Forty new names were added to the New York State Police Officers Memorial's Roll of Honor this year.