



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elaine Phillips

Senator Phillips: New Health Protections for Volunteer Firefighters Passed by State Legislature

ELAINE PHILLIPS June 22, 2017

| ISSUE: **VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**

Senator Elaine Phillips (R-Manhasset) announced that the Senate and Assembly have passed legislation that would provide additional healthcare benefits to volunteer firefighters who become seriously ill because of the hazards they encounter in the line of duty. Senator Phillips is a cosponsor of the legislation.

“Volunteer firefighters risk their lives every day to keep our families safe. Each time they fight a fire, they are exposed to toxins that increase their risk of developing cancer. Our volunteer firefighters are always there to help us during our time of need; we need to help them during theirs. That’s what these new benefits would do. Governor Cuomo should sign this legislation when it reaches his desk,” said Senator Phillips.

The legislation (S1411B) would provide enhanced cancer disability benefits to volunteer firefighters who have served for at least five years as an interior firefighter and successfully passed a physical examination upon entering the volunteer service that initially did not show any signs of cancer.

If these volunteer firefighters develop cancer – including melanoma, digestive, hematological, lymphatic, urinary, prostate, neurological, breast and reproductive cancers –

they would be eligible for a lump sum payment of \$25,000. If the volunteer is totally disabled, a monthly benefit of \$1,500 per month would be payable up to 36 consecutive months. In the case of death, their family would be eligible for an accidental death benefit in the amount of \$50,000.

According to the Fireman's Association of the State of New York (FASNY), studies have found that firefighters face a higher rate of cancer than the general population. This is due to the fact that today's homes have far more products such as cell phones, televisions, computers and petroleum based furniture items, all of which release dangerous carcinogens when they burn. Exposure to these toxins during a fire increases firefighters' risk of developing cancer.

The legislation will be sent to Governor Cuomo for consideration.