



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo proposal to address fire hazards associated with cocklofts in residences passes Senate

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. June 18, 2018

| ISSUE: **COCKLOFTS, FIRE SAFETY, TAX CREDIT, ADDABBO**

Noting that a May 28<sup>th</sup> cockloft fire in an Elmhurst, Queens apartment building recently injured five firefighters, NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. is continuing to push his legislation (S.3065) to provide financial assistance to homeowners who are interested in removing these dangerous structures from their buildings.

The bill was recently passed by the full State Senate, and is now under review by the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

Addabbo initially introduced the legislation in the wake of a raging five-alarm blaze in Middle Village in 2013, which damaged seven homes, injured 11 firefighters, and may have been exacerbated by the existence of cocklofts in the structures. Cocklofts are often found in row houses and are generally defined as large concealed spaces between the top floor ceiling and the underside of the roof deck on homes.

“In the wake of this terrible fire, I decided to introduce legislation to aid homeowners in making structural modifications to their properties to eliminate these serious hazards,” said Addabbo. “Here in Queens and elsewhere, there has been growing evidence that cocklofts lead to extremely fast-moving and hard-to-control flames that put both residents and first

responders at serious risk. There is no question that we need to address these dangers.”

Under Addabbo’s amended legislation, residents whose homes contain cocklofts would be able to apply for a tax credit equal to 25 percent of the cost of making improvements to eliminate the fire hazards. The increased maximum credit would be \$5,000.

Addabbo noted that the ferocity of the 2013 Middle Village fire was said at the time to be related to these attic structures. Since then, other serious fires have occurred in buildings with cocklofts, including the most recent May 28<sup>th</sup> blaze where firefighters had to cut a hole in the building roof to put out the flames. Other examples include a fire in April of 2017 year that destroyed nearly half of the 112 apartments in a high-rise in Elmhurst, Queens. In that blaze, two firefighters were seriously injured and the Red Cross was called in to provide assistance to 144 adults and 31 children affected by the fire.

“If providing tax incentives to homeowners to repair cocklofts will help to save even one life from fire, it will be well worth it,” said Addabbo. “This bill seeks to lend a hand to homeowners who might otherwise be unable to afford the improvements, and may ultimately prevent devastating tragedies.”

Addabbo noted that connected row houses are no longer designed and built with cocklofts owing to their dangerous ability to allow flames to move quickly from building to building. “So now it’s time to take aim at the cocklofts that still exist and should be closed off,” he said.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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**2017-S3065**

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- Introduced
  
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Vetoed By Governor
  
- Signed By Governor
  
- 

Enacts the residential structure fire prevention act of 2018

January 19, 2017

Vetoed

Sponsored by [Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.](#)

Do you support this bill?