



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

Senate Passes Metzger's Bill to Raise Cap on Retirement Funds for Volunteer Firefighters and Ambulance Squad Members

JEN METZGER June 12, 2019

| ISSUE: **RETIREMENT FUNDS, VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS, VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE SQUAD MEMBERS**

Albany, NY...Today, the State Senate passed Senator Jen Metzger's bill to increase the maximum annual amount that a municipality may pay into a retirement fund for volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance squad members, known as a Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP). The current cap is \$700, the legislation would raise it to \$1,200. Similar legislation was previously carried in the Senate by Metzger's predecessor, Senator John Bonacic, but did not make it out of committee.

"The limit on what local governments can pay into the retirement funds for volunteer firefighters and ambulance squads has been adjusted only once since it was put in place in 1988 and has not kept up with inflation," **explained Senator Metzger.** "Offering higher benefits will make it easier to recruit and keep these brave volunteers who fulfill such a vital role in protecting the safety, health and well-being of our residents."

In addition to the personal risks involved, volunteer firefighters make a significant time commitment with new volunteers required to fulfill 79 to 128 hours of training and to attend a minimum of 23 meetings, events and trainings just in the first year.

“As we work to recruit and retain volunteers, we have been encouraging our representatives in Albany to increase the maximum contribution to better reflect the important role these volunteers play in protecting the health and safety of our communities,” **explained Tim Rogers, Village of New Paltz Mayor.** “We are very grateful to Senator Metzger for supporting these efforts and getting this bill through the State Senate.”

“Our volunteer firefighters and rescue personnel are the backbone in our communities and this action to increase the yearly contribution cap amount is a long overdue ‘thank you’ to those who serve selflessly 365 days a year, 24/7,” **said William Wheeler Murray Village of New Paltz Trustee and Volunteer Firefighter with the New Paltz Fire Department.**

According to Mayor Tim Rogers, in 2018, individual volunteer firefighters in New Paltz attended 117 calls at a minimum, with some attending more than 700 calls.

Jen Metzger represents the 42nd Senate District, which includes all of Sullivan County and parts of Delaware, Orange, and Ulster Counties. Senator Metzger serves as Chair of the Agriculture Committee and sits on the Environmental Conservation, Education, Health, Energy and Telecommunications, Local Government, Women’s Issues, Domestic Animal Welfare, and Legislative Commission on Rural Resources Committees.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2019-S4207A

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- 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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Relates to the maximum contribution for certain service award programs

March 04, 2019

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Jen Metzger**

Do you support this bill?