



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

## Senator Andrew Gounardes, Assembly Member Stacey Pheffer Amato, Assembly Member Karines Reyes, 9/11 First Responders and Advocates Push for Passage of 9/11 Heroes Bills

ANDREW GOUNARDES June 13, 2019

| ISSUE: **9/11 FIRST RESPONDERS, 9/11**

Albany, NY– 9/11 first responders, advocates and union leaders joined Senator Andrew Gounardes, Assembly Member Stacey Pheffer Amato, Assembly Member Karines Reyes and members of the Senate at a press conference Thursday to push for passage of a package of 9/11 Heroes Bills. The three bills aim to close gaps in services for those who answered the call of duty on and after 9/11.

The three bills are as follows:

- S.1966 and A3593A: Address delays in WTC-related disability claims by increasing the number of medical boards and physicians employed on medical boards of NYCERS.
- S.5890 and A7819A: Expand NYC 9/11 first responders who qualify for unlimited sick leave and codify their access into law.
- S.5246A and A07716: Provide retirees of the New York City fire department diagnosed with cancer within five years of retirement presumption that the cancer was incurred in the performance of duties.

In the years since 9/11, at least 10,000 first responders and people around the World Trade Center have been diagnosed with cancer, and at least 2,000 have died. The toll for emergency responders from 9/11-related diseases continues to rise.

“Our City and our State also have an obligation to support our emergency responders – by making it easy for them to get sick leave and retirement benefits they’re owed in their hour of need, as they protected us in ours. For many who ran into the debris to serve their fellow New Yorkers that day, their struggles continue. We are with them in their fight every step of the way,” said State Senator Andrew Gounardes.

“The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, were a defining moment in the history of New York City, State, and the entire country,” Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato (D-Rockaway) said. “The tremendous loss caused by this unspeakable act was most acutely felt by the many citizens of our great state and city. Those who risked their lives without hesitation running into those burning buildings and those who served by returning in the aftermath to save the lives of others, exposed themselves to dangerous chemicals and toxins that have lasting effects. I am proud to stand here today with Senator Gounardes, our brave First Responders and Advocates in pushing for the passage of several bills that work to close gaps in services for those who answered the call of duty on and after 9/11.”

“The Cancer Look Back Bill, sponsored by myself in the Assembly and Senator Gounardes in the State Senate, allows many retired firefighters and fire officers the fighting chance against cancers caused by their profession. Being a firefighter is more than an occupation, it is a duty. Duty answered the call to save lives even if that meant losing their own. And while many have lived and gone into retirement, their health was irreparably damaged. It is our time to fight for them,” said Assembly Member Karines Reyes.

"Our government owes a debt of gratitude to the brave men and women who led the response to 9/11. We can never forget their service to us and to our nation. I've been fighting in D.C. to renew the 9/11 Victims Compensation Fund, and now I'm here in Albany to fight for our NYC first responders to get the sick leave and benefits they're owed. They gave us everything, and we cannot stop until they're taken care of," said John Feal, Founder of the FealGood Foundation and 9/11 First Responder.

"Just as Congress now sees fit to fully support every WTC 9/11 First Responder with the VCF I call upon every member of the NYS Legislature to embrace and support each and every bill going forward that will make the lives of first Responders that much easier, especially our WTC 9/11 heroes," said Gary Smiley, FDNY Local 2507 Uniformed Paramedics, EMT's & Inspectors WTC & Retiree's Liaison; FDNY Rescue Paramedic- Special Operations Command (retired due to 9/11 illness).

"We can never forget the heroic actions of our EMS workers on and after 9/11. These bills will make it easier for our members to get disability and health benefits if they have a 9/11-related illness. I'm proud to support this legislation," said Oren Barzilay, President of Uniformed EMTs, Paramedics & Fire Inspectors, FDNY.

"Our members put their lives on the line on 9/11. In the years after, we lost many more firefighters due to exposure to carcinogens and toxins. Because of these inherent risks, we urge lawmakers to grant the NYC firefighters same access to disability retirement that NYS Firefighters have. We ask you to stand with firefighters and those who love us by passing S.5246A, and stand with first responders by passing all three pieces of legislation," Sam Fresina, President of NYS Professional Firefighters Association.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2019-S1966

### Health Care, Physicians

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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 number of alternate physicians who may be appointed

January 18, 2019

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Andrew Gounardes**

Do you support this bill?

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## 2019-S5890

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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
- 

Relates to sick leave for officers and employees with a qualifying World Trade Center condition

May 16, 2019

Signed by Governor

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Do you support this bill?

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## 2019-S5246

Firefighters, Department of Labor, Disability, Disability insurance

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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
- 

Relates to disabilities of certain retired firefighters caused by cancer

April 18, 2019

Signed by Governor

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Do you support this bill?