



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

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

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. June 25, 2019

| ISSUE: **HOME FIRES, COCKLOFTS, ADDABBO**

In the wake of even more devastating fires statewide associated with cocklofts, NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. is continuing to push his proposal to provide homeowners with tax incentives to repair these dangerous structures in their residences. The bill (S.4398) has been approved by the full State Senate, and awaits action by the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

“In 2019, a number of horrific fires have been reported, and they all had cocklofts in common,” said Addabbo. “These blazes have occurred in Queens, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Yonkers, and even Albany, where 65 people were recently left homeless. The flames leap from building to building through the cocklofts, and are incredibly difficult to contain.”

Addabbo first introduced the legislation in 2013 after a raging five-alarm blaze in Middle Village 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.

“It was clear to me then, and is clear to me now, that we need to aid homeowners in making structural modifications to their properties to eliminate these serious hazards,” said Addabbo. Under his 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 maximum credit would be \$5,000.

Last year, the legislation passed both the Senate and Assembly, but was vetoed by Governor Cuomo for fiscal reasons.

“The State Legislature needs to pass this bill and the Governor needs to sign it to prevent future damage and possibly death. With these continuing instances of cockloft-related fires forcing people out of their homes and injuring our firefighters, we need to strongly consider the very significant benefits of eliminating these fire hazards,” said a frustrated Addabbo. “If providing tax incentives to homeowners to repair cocklofts will help to save even one life from fire, it will be well worth it. This bill will aid 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. “The time is long overdue to repair the cocklofts that still exist and close them off,” he said.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2019-S4398**

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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 2019

March 11, 2019

Vetoed

Sponsored by **Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.**

Do you support this bill?