



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## O'Mara joins Senate colleagues to co-sponsor 'Community Heroes Protection Act': Legislation seeks greater protections for law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency services personnel

THOMAS F. O'MARA February 21, 2020

| ISSUE: **FIRST RESPONDERS**



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**Elmira, N.Y.**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) is co-sponsoring legislation to designate crimes specifically targeting police and correction officers, parole and other law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency medical services personnel as hate crimes.

The legislation (**S335/A5065**) has bipartisan support in the Legislature. Assemblyman Peter Abbate (D-Brooklyn) sponsors the measure in the Assembly. It is currently in committee in both the Senate and Assembly.

“We need to stand strong behind the brave men and women putting their lives on the line day in and day out, night after night, protecting our communities and neighborhoods,” said O’Mara. “They are doing their jobs in an increasingly dangerous, hostile and, far too often, deadly environment where they are being targeted for violence simply because of the uniform they wear.”

The legislation O’Mara co-sponsors, which has been called the “Community Heroes Protection Act,” would classify all crimes against law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency medical services personnel, as hate crimes. The offenses would be designated as hate crimes if they were intentionally aimed at first responders based on the profile of their career. Under current law, when a person is convicted of a hate crime and the specified offense is a misdemeanor or a class C, D or E felony, the hate crime shall be deemed to be one category higher than the specified offense or one category higher than the offense level applicable to the defendant’s conviction.