



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel G. Stec

## James Brooks Jr. Act would improve volunteer firefighter benefit law

DANIEL G. STEC April 19, 2021

| ISSUE: **VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**



Senator Dan Stec is cosponsoring legislation that would add vascular rupture to the list of injuries covered under the Volunteer Firefighters' Benefit Law.

Stec made the announcement, along with Long Island Senator John Brooks, Assembly members Matt Simpson and Carrie Woerner and Whitehall Volunteer Fire Company Chief Brian Brooks, at a press conference in Albany today.

“Most of us will fortunately never need the help of a volunteer firefighter,” said Stec. “But for those who do, it’s wonderful knowing that help is on the way. Assistant Chief James Brooks was one of those special individuals who would put his life on hold to rush to help others. Tragically, in the course of responding to an emergency, he suffered a very serious injury, which months later cost him his life. The insurance fund intended to help with medical expenses did not cover his care, which totaled more than \$1 million dollars.”

Chief James Brooks Jr. was a second assistant fire chief for the Whitehall Volunteer Fire Company, having served over 27 years. On May 2, 2020, he suffered an aortic rupture while responding to a structural fire in the Town of Dresden, Washington County.

After a significant battle toward recovery, Brooks died on September 17, 2020, from health complications due his injury. The New York State Workers Compensation Board determined that Brooks’ injury does not qualify for insurance coverage.

The legislation (S4562/A6767) would create a presumption of coverage under the Volunteer Firefighters’ Benefit Law for vascular ruptures suffered in the line of duty. The legislation would assure coverage for this kind of injury in the same way that heart attacks, for example, are covered.

The bill is pending consideration by the Senate Local Government Committee.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

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**2021-S4562**

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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
  -

Allows claims for benefits for death or disability due to vascular rupture

February 05, 2021

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **John E. Brooks**

Do you support this bill?