

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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PHONE: (315) 568-9816

HELMING PASSES LEGISLATION TO GIVE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS GREATER HEALTH PROTECTIONS

Senator Pam Helming (R-54th District) yesterday helped pass legislation to better protect the health of volunteer firefighters who become sick due to the hazards they encounter from their service to the community. The bill ([S1411](#)), expands the benefits available to volunteer firefighters when they contract certain illnesses and cancers as a result of their dangerous work.

“Volunteer firefighters valiantly serve our communities and put their lives on the line for us every day to protect our lives and property,” said Senator Helming. “These unsung heroes of our upstate communities are critical in meeting our emergency services needs in often hazardous environments and dangerous circumstances. For their service, they must be provided every protection that the state can afford them.”

Overexposure to smoke increases the risk of contracting cancer of the lungs, but may also cause cancer in an individual's esophagus, stomach, blood, intestines, and even the brain. A [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\) study](#) suggests firefighters are at higher risk of cancers of the digestive, oral, respiratory, and urinary systems when compared to the general population.

This legislation expands the existing coverage available under the Volunteer Firefighters Benefit Law to include cancer of the digestive, hematological, lymphatic, urinary, prostate, neurological, breast and reproductive systems or melanoma.

The bill has been sent to the Assembly for consideration.