



BROOME COUNTY FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION BROOME COUNTY, NEW YORK

New York State Establishes Volunteer Firefighter and EMS Recruitment Fund

Gov. David A. Paterson has signed a bill that creates a volunteer firefighter and volunteer emergency services recruitment and retention fund. This will be one of the check-off funds that appear on New York State Income Tax returns. Checking the box for the fund will result in a donation being made to the fund. Volunteer Fire Departments and EMS squads will then be able to apply for grants from the fund to assist them in their efforts to recruit and retain volunteers.

The bill (S.4982 / A.2733) sponsored by Sen. Brian X. Foley, D-Brookhaven, and Assemblyman Robert K. Sweeney, D-Lindenhurst, also authorizes gifts to the fund through a state income tax check off. The governor signed the bill on Oct. 28.

Ibrahim Khan, spokesman for Foley, said the senator has made helping firefighters a priority while in office.

"We've seen a drop in the number of firefighters in New York state and especially on Long Island," said Khan.

Khan said that according to USA Today in a study conducted a few years ago, the number of volunteer firefighters in New York state has decreased from 140,000 to 100,000 in just 15 years.

"Helping firefighters throughout the state is a priority ... they want and need a little bit of help," said Khan. "We're thrilled that this bill is finally signed, the opportunity to help volunteers and firefighters is one that allows us to help the communities throughout Long Island."