

ARKANSAS

PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS

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February 10, 2013

Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor
State of New York
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

As a member of the fire service, we are not concerned about the community or neighborhood in which you grew up; the color of your skin; the school you attended, or any of a host of other features, experiences or preferences that define many as individuals. However, the fire service shares an unbreakable bond, that may be best characterized as an overwhelming concern about the welfare and fairness extended to all those with whom we serve.

I am writing to you today, not as a constituent, but as President of Arkansas Professional Fire Fighters Association. We cannot stand by while our family of brother and sisters in the fire service are the target of repeated affirmative acts by you since becoming Governor that are simply unacceptable.

More specifically, we find your actions during your first two years as the state's chief executive to be disproportionately punitive to the members of the fire service by seeking to divide New York's first responders by creating a new pension tier, before the impact of a modification enacted in 2010 was known.

In recent days, we once again see that you have advanced legislation that erodes the rights of fire fighters by seeking to circumvent the process of binding arbitration when local contract negotiations break down. This is a cynical act, and one which we may have expected to originate from the desks of conservative governors in "Right to Work States."

We are disappointed, that you have taken such a hard turn-away from New York's progressive labor tradition.

And, while we once felt that you possessed qualities that reflected our fundamental core values, and were the type of figure that we could all rally behind, sadly we have learned that that your actions and record are to the contrary. We question your sincerity, are confused by your ideology and simply are unable to understand your true political compass.

We call on you to withdraw your proposal. An attack on the rights of New York's Fire Fighters is an attack on all of us.

Sincerely,

Edward Jaros
President
Arkansas Professional Fire Fighters