



New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association, Inc.

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REV. JOHN TALLMAN
40 Collins Place
Albany, NY 12208

May 28, 2020

Dear Members of New York's Congressional Delegation,

On behalf of the 18,000 fire fighters in 107 Locals in various cities, villages, and towns across New York State that comprise the New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association (NYSPPFA), I am writing to ask for your continued, bipartisan support for Federal legislation that will provide much needed aid for New York State's municipalities that have already been ravaged due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We stand shoulder to shoulder with our fire fighter brothers and sisters from across the nation in making this much-needed request to you and the Senate and House leadership.

Since COVID-19 began to rapidly spread throughout the state in March, our brave men and women have been working nonstop on the front lines while serving their communities – that's our job. With state revenues falling and a severe economic downturn on the horizon, we need our government to do their job and aid our struggling municipalities.

New York State's General Fund receipts are projected to decline by \$13.3 billion in fiscal year 2021 and \$61 billion by 2024. Without assistance from Congress, New York State will be forced to propose over \$10 billion in spending cuts, putting citizens at risk as their fire departments will be forced to lay off workers and reduce response capacities.

The possibility of severe impacts due to this unprecedented disaster will be felt directly by fire departments of all sizes and all across the state as they face decreased tax revenue and other significant fiscal pressures. It is unconscionable to me that budget cuts would lead to layoffs of fire fighters and other first responders, particularly after all we have sacrificed so far.

During his budget release on April 16, Mayor Bill de Blasio noted New York City's revenue shortfall and pushed for additional Federal aid, while also stating that without assistance, "the city would be forced to make 'horrible choices,' including city employee layoffs as a "last resort."



The FDNY is the largest fire department in the nation and one of world's busiest in responding to over one million emergencies every year. Members of the FDNY have been on the ground for countless critical incidents including natural disasters, terrorist attacks and now a global health epidemic.

In addition to New York City, other, smaller local governments are already preparing for this shortfall, as Albany has already registered a 40 percent reduction in local tax revenue and it has been announced that fire fighters in Schenectady are expecting a 23 percent reduction in work force without Federal aid.

The emergency responders across New York State are asking our leaders in Washington to arrive at a consensus solution that will provide localities the funds they need to recover and survive in a post COVID-19 environment. This is not a Democrat or Republican issue, but an issue of survival for local governments and their workforce.

The citizens of New York State deserve an effective and reliable fire service to call on when they are in need, but that service is now threatened as tax revenue continues to fall. New York State fire fighters and paramedics have been working on the front lines of this pandemic – in every corner of the state -- acting as the first point of contact with COVID patients before they are transported to a hospital for additional care. Now is not the time to force a choice between care and layoffs, now is the time to ensure that fire fighters stay on the job to continue serving their community.

As time passes and we emerge from this crisis, there will be a continued need for fire service to assure that localities will have a safe and full recovery from the effects of this pandemic. Please pass legislation to adequately fund states and localities so departments are not forced to make that decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Fresina', is written over a horizontal line.

Samuel Fresina, President
NYSPFFA