



NEW YORK STATE PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

Samuel Fresina – President
James McGowan – Secretary Treasurer
David Holleran – Executive Vice President

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NYSPPFA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES INCLUDE:

***PROTECTION FROM THYROID CANCER AND TRAUMA; TRAINING
TRANSPARENCY; AND SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS FAMILIES***

With the legislative calendar reflecting six days until the close of the 2024 session in Albany, the New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association (NYSPPFA) remain committed to four priorities that serve the communities they protect, the union's membership, and the families that rely upon them.

NYSPPFA President Sam Fresina said: "Measures that protect the health and lives of those reporting to fire houses for their shifts and honors their commitment to those whose lives were tragically lost while on the job – must receive top priority. Taking action now provides protection in the future."

On a daily basis, fire fighters are exposed to dangerous toxins and repeated incidents of trauma. The NYSPPFA and its the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) have long advocated for early screening, diagnosis and treatment of health conditions presumed to have been caused as a result to exposures to chemicals and carcinogens. In fact, recent screenings have revealed an extraordinarily high incidence of thyroid cancer among fire fighters, compared to the general population, stemming from chemicals in their protective equipment and gases that are biproducts of incineration and combustion.

We request immediate passage of legislation advanced by Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato (**Assembly Bill No. 9933**) and Senator Andrew Gounardes (**Senate Bill No. 9205**) to add thyroid cancer as among the recognized presumed health conditions associated with the performance of their duties as a fire fighter.

NYSPPFA has continuously fought to protect the health benefits of our retired fire fighters. Health insurance coverage is a major issue for retirees, who often face tremendous health care costs at a time of severely diminished income and the continuation of health insurance after retirement is critical for our members. Our firefighters are acknowledged as true heroes who place themselves in danger to protect their fellow citizens and part of society's obligation to our firefighter should be to assure them of adequate health insurance, both during their working years and into retirement. NYSPPFA supports the "Health Equity for Retirees Act" (HERA).

The bill is sponsored by Assemblyman Kenneth Zebrowski (**Assembly Bill No. 7866-B**) and Senator Pete Harckham (**Senate Bill No. 8388-B**), which prohibits public employers from diminishing the health insurance benefits of public employee retirees.

A significant number of communities across New York State are served by combination fire departments – those in which full-time career fire fighters are supported by locally based volunteers. It is critical that command staff be informed of the qualifications and training of personnel on scene as they consider various options while providing emergency responses and tactical options. It is essential that a registry of fire fighters certified for interior attack is maintained by the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control, and that it possesses the authority to ensure compliance with the law. The bill is sponsored by Assemblyman David Weprin (**Assembly Bill No. 9241**) and Senator Robert Jackson (**Senate Bill No. 8574**).

Finally, we ask for the continued support for survivors of fire fighters who gave their lives in service. Legislation authorizing an adjustment to the benefits available to spouses and children must be adjusted to provide an adequate level of support and relative to the consumer price index. The measure is also sponsored by Assemblywoman Pheffer Amato (**Assembly Bill No 10111**) and Senator Gounardes (**Senate Bill No. 9076**).

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*The **New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association** represents more than 18,000 fire fighters working full-time as members of municipal fire departments across the state. Its membership serve in 110 union locals, in 41 counties and New York City.*