



Thursday, November 12, 2009



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News from Assemblyman Robert K. Sweeney

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[Sweeney: New Law Will Help to Ease Burden on First Responders](#)

Will provide funding to recruit and retain emergency service volunteers

November 2, 2009

Assemblyman Robert Sweeney (D-Lindenhurst) announced today that legislation he authored to establish the Volunteer Firefighting and Volunteer Emergency Services Recruitment and Retention Fund has been signed into law as Chapter 490 of the Laws of 2009. The law authorizes taxpayers to make gifts to the fund through a state income tax check off. It is estimated the fund could raise \$1 million per year.

The fund will be used to offer grants to volunteer firefighters and emergency service organizations for the purpose of encouraging the recruitment and retention of volunteers.

"Volunteer firefighters and volunteer emergency services workers are crucial to the safety and well-being of the citizens of this state. They routinely demonstrate courage in the face of danger. Hopefully this fund, which will consist of voluntary contributions, will make it easier for them to provide their critical lifesaving services to our communities", said Sweeney.

Thomas Cuff, Jr., President of Firemen's Association of the State of New York said: "We at FASNY are delighted that Assemblyman Bob Sweeney has demonstrated, once again, a keen insight for the needs of New York's volunteer firefighters and EMS responders. By sponsoring the Volunteer Firefighter and EMS Recruitment and Retention Fund, signed as Chapter 490 by Governor Paterson, Assemblyman Sweeney has created for volunteers and the communities they serve a way to keep the recruitment and retention process enthusiastic and robust without creating costs for the state."

Mike Mastrianni, President of New York State Volunteer Ambulance and Rescue Association, said, "On behalf of New York State's volunteer emergency medical services providers, I want to thank Governor Paterson for signing this bill and Senator Foley and Assemblyman Sweeney for their leadership and support on this critical issue; recruitment and retention of volunteers. This is probably the most daunting task all of us face. By creating the Volunteer Firefighter and EMS Recruitment Fund, and providing a funding mechanism in statute, much needed assistance can be provided to local volunteer emergency services departments as they struggle to provide the highest quality service to their communities throughout New York."

Senator Brian Foley (D- Hauppauge) sponsored this legislation in the New York State Senate.

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