



The Siren

Important News and Updates for NYSPFFA Members

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GOVERNOR'S 2013-14 EXECUTIVE BUDGET THREATENS BINDING ARBITRATION

NYSPFFA Urges Members to Take Action

On Tuesday, January 22nd, Gov. Andrew Cuomo released his budget proposal for the state's 2013-14 fiscal year. (Read more about the Governor's budget on the next page).

In his budget, the Governor proposes to extend Binding Arbitration — which is set to expire on July 1, 2013 — for an additional four years. But his proposal is not a straight extender of current law. Instead, **it would limit future arbitration awards to a maximum of 2% if the local government is deemed "fiscally stressed."**

This proposal represents an unprecedented attack on fundamental Firefighters' rights. Firefighters are not the reason that local governments throughout the state are struggling, and we should not have to pay the price for politicians who cannot balance their books.

All NYSPFFA members are urged to take action — contact your elected official and let them know that this proposal must be rejected. Get more information on the [NYSPFFA web site](http://nyspffa.org).

CALENDAR

Feb. 4, 2013 — [Albany Meetings: Protect Binding Arbitration](#)

May 6-8 2013—[NYSPFFA Legislative Conference](#)

June 24-27, 2013—[NYSPFFA Annual Convention](#)

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information in this newsletter, please contact Joseph Dougherty or John Black at (518) 436-0751. For other NYSPFF matters, please contact Mike McManus or Sam Fresina at (518) 436-8827.

ALBANY UPDATE GOVERNOR PROPOSES 2013-14 STATE BUDGET

Last week, Gov. Cuomo proposed proposing a \$136.4 billion spending plan for the state's upcoming fiscal year, a 1.9% increase over the current fiscal year. Including expected federal funds relating to Hurricane Sandy aid, the budget proposal totals \$142.6 billion. His budget would eliminate a \$1.3 billion state deficit without imposing any new, broad-based taxes.

Budget highlights include a 4.4% school aid increase, which includes \$75 million in competitive grants to fund some of his education programs; increasing the state's minimum wages from \$7.25 per hour to \$8.75 per hour; a third round of the Regional Economic Development Council funding; a state tourism initiative; and support for Superstorm Sandy recovery and rebuilding projects.

The next step in the state's budget process is a series of hearings by the Legislature, which run through Feb. 27th. The Governor can amend his original proposal through Feb. 21st.

Once the hearing process is done, we expect the Legislature and the Governor to negotiate to get a spending plan in place before the start of the new fiscal year on April 1st.

9/11 FUND TO MAKE FIRST PAYOUTS

Earlier this week, officials announced that fifteen firefighters who worked at or near Ground Zero after the 9/11 attacks will be the first to receive awards from the \$2.8 billion Sept. 11 victim compensation fund

We are pleased that the fund is finally up and running, and we hope that every hero who spent time at Ground Zero and whose health has suffered for it receives appropriate compensation.

If you have applied to the fund to receive compensation, be sure that your employers has the authorization that they need to confirm that you worked at Ground Zero. Otherwise, your application will be considered incomplete.

GOVERNOR PROPOSES CHANGES TO AMBULANCE CON PROCESS AS PART OF EXECUTIVE BUDGET

The Governor's proposed budget would amend Public Health Law Article 30 to reform the overall planning process for emergency medical services (EMS).

Specifically, the Governor

proposes consolidate into a single State Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board (SEMSAB) the four existing statewide bodies:

- the State Emergency Medical Services Council (SEMSCO);
- the State Emergency Medical Advisory Committee (SEMAC)
- the State Trauma Advisory Committee (STAC); and
- the Emergency Medical Services for Children Council (EMS-C).

In addition, the 18 Regional Emergency Medical Services Councils (REMSCO's) would be consolidated into 10 units.

The Governor's proposal would also eliminate the automatic need presumption for municipalities seeking to operate an ambulance service. Instead, he would require municipalities seeking to establish an ambulance service to apply directly to the Department of Health which would make a need determination.

Under current law, municipalities receive an automatic two-year certification and then must seek a permanent operating certificate from their local REMSCO and the SEMSCO.