



## New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association, Inc.

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May 19, 2016

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo  
Executive Chamber  
New York State Capitol  
Albany, New York 12224

Alphonso David  
Counsel to the Governor  
Executive Chamber  
New York State Capitol  
Albany, New York 12224

RE: An act to amend the retirement and social security law, in relation to providing credit to members of public retirement systems of the state for military service; and making an appropriation thereof

**A. 9531 (Paulin)**

**S. 7160 (Larkin)**

### MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

Submitted on behalf of the New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association.

**The New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association (NYSPFFA), I.A.F.F. AFL-CIO**, a not-for-profit association representing approximately 18,000 fire fighters in 104 Locals in various cities, villages and towns across New York State, strongly supports enactment of this legislation that would amend the New York State Retirement and Social Security Law ("RSSL") to extend the Military Service Credit Law of 2000 to all veterans who honorably served in the United States Armed Forces.

The Military Service Credit Law of 2000, Chapter 548 of the Laws of 2000 and Chapter 547 of the Laws of 2002, authorizes up to three (3) years of service credit in the public retirement system for a public employee's honorable military service. The Law, however, only identifies certain armed conflicts that would allow a veteran to qualify for this service credit.

For nearly the last two generations, this Country has relied upon its citizens to volunteer for military service. Such volunteers are vital to ensuring this Country's readiness to protect our borders and citizens during times of war and peace. However, only a miniscule fraction of Americans have answered our Nation's call. Those veterans currently in active public employment should be recognized for their selfless military service.

This proposed legislation would amend Section 1000 of the RSSL by removing the specific periods of time restricting a public employee from receiving the credit and allow veterans' honorable military service to count even when veterans served during a time of peace. In fact, service during specific conflicts has little relevance as to whether a service member was actively engaged in hostile fire or served in combat zones.

Moreover, the military experience and skills of fire fighters have shown to significantly contribute to and increase the professionalism and effectiveness of fire districts and fire departments throughout the State. In addition to recognizing New York State veterans for their service, this legislation would assist in recruiting and retaining these highly qualified veterans to continue serving and protecting the public.

Therefore, the NYSPFFA strongly supports the enactment of this legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael T. McManus, President  
New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association