**[DATE]**

Alphonso David

Counsel to the Governor

Executive Chamber

New York State Capitol

Albany, New York 12224 **LETTER IN SUPPORT**

Re: *A.7146-A (Abbate)/S.5012-A (Golden) – An act to amend the retirement and social security law, in relation to accidental disability retirement*

Dear Mr. David:

As **[CHOOSE ONE: a fire fighter employed by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ / members of NAME OF UNION]**, **[I/we]** strongly urge the enactment this legislation that would extend the filing deadline from two years to five years for fire fighters in the New York State and Local Police and Fire Retirement System to file an application for disability benefits due to certain cancers.

The increased use of plastic and other chemical compounds have resulted in significant changes in the nature of the compounds to which fire fighters are exposed in combatting fires. Reports have shown that fire fighters are diagnosed with cancer in greater frequency than the average adult. Such increase is due to fire fighters’ exposure to the increasing types and quantities of chemical carcinogens off-gassing from the burning of plastic and other chemical compounds.

The current law requires that a fire fighter file for disability benefits within two years after his or her normal retirement. This period of time is too short to detect and diagnose the deleterious effect of inhaling these noxious gases. In many cases, the cancer can take years to develop into noticeable symptoms.

In response, this legislation would create a five-year period to file for disability and afford fire fighters a greater opportunity to file for disability benefits under Section 363-d of the Retirement and Social Security Law. Alternatively, without this extension, fire fighters who suffer from cancer from the performance of their duties will be foreclosed from filing for benefits for reasons beyond their control.

Respectfully submitted,

**[NAME]**

4822-1770-1437, v. 1