



2019 NYSPFFA End of Session Report

As we noted during the NYSPFFA Convention in Saratoga Springs last month, the New York State Legislature concluded the 2019 legislative session in the early morning hours of Friday, June 21.

This session marked an increase in the number of bills passed by both houses, 935 compared to 641 passed in 2018. This year's total was the largest since the two houses approved 963 bills in 2006. The final 935 total is also a massive jump from the 216 bills that had passed both houses by the end of May, and even the 382 that had been approved as of June 17.

The following bills delineated below have passed both houses and await delivery to Gov. Cuomo for action. Throughout the remainder of the year, we will provide you with legislative updates on the progress of these bills via the NYSPFFA website as well as our Relay app.

Qualifications to Serve as a Fire Chief (S.6524 Gounardes/A.8341 Abbate)

- The initial fire chief qualification bill (Chapter 406 of 2018) was signed on December 21, 2018 and took effect on January 20, 2019.
- The purpose of the bill was to create minimal, yet necessary training requirements for individuals seeking to become Chiefs in combination departments with six or more paid fire fighters.
- This bill further clarifies the intent of the original legislation that the requirements apply to both volunteer and professional fire fighters looking to become chief.

20 Year Optional "Bubble Bill" (S.6367 Gounardes/A7920-C Abbate)

- Firefighters hired after January 2010 were placed into the Tier V pension plan.
- However, those firefighters hired between July 1, 2009 and the effective date of Tier V (January 9, 2010) working under a current collective bargaining agreement were provided the opportunity to elect or remain in a non-contributory twenty year plan until the expiration of their respective contracts.
- This same protection was not afforded firefighters working without a collective bargaining agreement. This bill would afford the same opportunities to such professional firefighters as those working pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement.
- This bill would not apply to any member in Tier VI.

New York City Fire Cancer Presumption (S.5246-A Goundardes /A.7716-A Reyes)

- Currently, fire fighters in New York City are only eligible for enhanced retirement benefits under this presumption if cancer is diagnosed during the term of service but not after they retire.
- This is legislation will provide the benefit both during the term of service and five years into retirement.

Special Accidental Death Benefit COLA (S.3168-B Gounardes/A.4079-B Joyner)

- Since 1978, the Legislature passed, and the Governor signed into law, a cost of living increase and a one-year escalation for all New York State widows and widowers of police officers and fire fighters killed in the line-of-duty. The intent of the original 1978 law was to increase benefits to an amount that would reflect the impact of inflation. The law, however, did not provide for any additional cost of living increases after July 1, 1979.

Additional Bills of Interest:

A230 Braunstein (MS) -- Same as S 4119 LIU

SUMM : Add §3006-a, Pub Health L Prohibits emergency service providers from selling patient health information without written consent.

A4436 Abbate -- Same as S 3801 SKOUFIS

SUMM : Add §§63-g, 63-h, 607-i & 607-j, R & SS L Relates to disability benefits for firefighters employed by the division of military and naval affairs.

A7053 Thiele (MS) -- Same as S 5054 LAVALLE

SUMM : Amd §353-d, Ag & Mkts L Relates to the confinement of companion animals in unattended motor vehicles under conditions that endanger the health or well-being of an animal and what can be done in the event an animal is seen suffering; adds paid or volunteer firefighters and emergency services personnel as persons authorized to remove such companion animals from unattended vehicles because of extreme temperatures; and provides penalties.

A8003 Abbate -- Same as S 6130-A KAMINSKY

SUMM : Amd §384, R & SS L Relates to mandatory retirement age; increases the age at which a member must retire to receive an additional pension from sixty-two to sixty-five.

S439A HOYLMAN -- Same as A 445-A Steck

SUMM : Add §159-b, Exec L Relates to reducing the use of PFAS chemicals in firefighting activities.

S3247B SALAZAR -- Same as A 1024-B Rosenthal L

SUMM : Amd §3000-c, Pub Health L Authorizes certain law enforcement officers and firefighters to possess and administer epinephrine by use of an epinephrine auto-injector device.