



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

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**SAMUEL A. FRESINA**  
President

**JAMES J. MCGOWAN**  
Secretary-Treasurer

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### CHAPLAIN

**REV. JOHN TALLMAN**  
40 Collins Place  
Albany, NY 12208

May 7, 2024

RE: AN ACT to amend the retirement and social security law, in relation to allowing paid firefighters to receive disability benefits for endocrine/thyroid cancer

S.9205 (Gounardes)

A.9933 (Pheffer Amato)

### MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

**The New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association (NYSPFFA), I.A.F.F. AFL-CIO**, a not-for-profit association representing 18,000 fire fighters in 110 Locals in various cities, villages, and towns across New York State, strongly supports the enactment of this legislation, which will add endocrine/thyroid cancer to the presumptive diseases that firefighters are currently protected by under state law.

Last year, Gov. Hochul signed legislation adding thyroid cancer to the list of cancer presumptions granted to New York City firefighters (Chapter 715 of 2023). This legislation would ensure that all of the professional firefighters in New York State are included. Additionally, other U.S. states include thyroid cancer as a covered, presumptive disease for firefighters including, but not limited to Arkansas; Delaware; Florida; Georgia; Michigan; and Nevada.

Various reports have shown that fire fighters are diagnosed with cancer in greater frequency than the average adult population. Such increase is due to fire fighter's exposure to the additional types and quantities of chemical carcinogens off gassing from the burning of the aforementioned plastics and chemical compounds.

In recent years there has been an increase in the rate of thyroid cancer in firefighters. In June 2022, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) convened an international meeting of scientists to re-evaluate firefighting as an exposure related to cancer, where they determined the following:



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- Literature supports reclassifying firefighting to a Group 1 carcinogen (carcinogenic to humans) based on “sufficient” evidence. This is the highest classification of exposure only assigned when there is scientific certainty.
- There was also “strong” mechanistic evidence that occupational exposure as a firefighter shows the following key characteristics of carcinogens in exposed humans: “is genotoxic”, “induces epigenetic alterations”, “induces oxidative stress”, “induces chronic inflammation”, and “modulates receptor-mediated effects”.

The enactment of this bill into law is necessary to protect the health and safety of our members and therefore, NYSPFFA strongly supports the enactment of this legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Samuel A. Fresina, President

New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association

