

FASNY'S TOP PRIORITIES FOR 2009

VFBL/VAWBL REFORM – To support with legislation, negotiations with the governor and legislature, the reform of VFBL/VAWBL equating benefit levels and program parameters to the Worker's Compensation Reform Act of 2007 including the following:

COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT – To provide a cost of living adjustment to benefits received by permanently-totally disabled volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers.

CANCER IMPAIRMENT - To extend the section of the volunteer firefighters' benefit law that creates a presumption of evidence that diseases of the lung which result in total or partial disability or death were caused by the individual's exposure while in the line of duty.

COVERAGE FOR NON-JURISDICTIONAL RESPONSE - To amend VFBL and VAWBL to provide for coverage in instances where a responder is located outside his or her jurisdiction or area of responsibility.

EXPANDED CANCER IMPAIRMENT – To enact legislation that would amend the volunteer firefighters' benefit law to establish a presumption as to the cause of certain disabilities.

EXTEND VFBL BENEFITS – Amend VFBL law to expand benefits to include injuries sustained while participating in an approved physical fitness program.

HEART BILL - To amend the Volunteer Firefighters' Benefit Law to make permanent the provisions of the heart death and disability law.

HEALTH INSURANCE – To amend law to address generalities in the new health insurance law in order to clarify the requirements of the local municipalities and the administration of benefits.

Recurring Budget

FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION COLLEGE TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM – To assure continuation of the program beyond 2010 at current funding levels and to adapt the program for new recruits by adjusting age limitations, distance from institution requirements and to allow for more than one applicant from a department and/or company when funds allow.

LOW INTEREST LOAN FUNDING – To assure that adequate and continuous funding for the Emergency Services Low Interest Revolving Loan Program is maintained at the levels required to meet the needs of the fire service by requesting a one time additional increase to allow for funding needed to meet the anticipated demand.

FUNDING FOR FIRE AND BUILDING CODE EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT - To maintain funding within the Department of State for Code Enforcement Training and to amend relevant sections of law, including State Finance Law Sec. 54-g, in order to establish a fund dedicated to reimbursement of local governments for code enforcement expenses.

Public Safety

HAZARDOUS MATERIAL EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESPONSE ACT - To enact legislation to establish a statewide hazardous material safety program, to provide for the creation of Hazardous Material Emergency Response Accounts in each county and to establish a system for the reimbursement of cleanup costs associated with the release of hazardous materials by known and unknown parties.

ELIMINATION OF EXEMPTION FROM SEAT BELT LAW – To amend New York law to eliminate the current exemption for emergency vehicles from use of seat belts requirement.

SEX OFFENDERS– Amend the executive law, village law and general municipal law to allow for a criminal background check of individuals applying for membership in a volunteer fire department or volunteer emergency medical services who may have been convicted of a sex offense or attempted sex offense.

Firefighters

MUNICIPAL DEPOSITS FOR CREDIT UNIONS – To amend relevant state laws to allow local governments to deposit public funds in credit unions.

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER & EMS RECRUITMENT FUND – To enact legislation to establish the Volunteer Firefighting and Volunteer Emergency Services fund and authorize gifts to such fund through a state income tax check-off to promote programs to entice volunteer recruitment.

PERSONAL INCOME TAX CREDIT ADJUSTMENT – To enact legislation to allow volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers to receive a real property tax exemption and the income tax credit.

HIV TESTING – To enact legislation that would require source patient testing for HIV when an emergency responder suffers a blood or body fluid exposure.

BLUE LIGHT – Amend the Vehicle & Traffic law to allow fire and ambulance vehicles to affix blue lights on the back of their vehicle facing to the rear as authorized for police vehicles.

HIGHWAY EMERGENCY INCIDENT SAFETY ZONE – To amend the Vehicle & Traffic Law to create a highway emergency incident safety zone delineated by red, white, and blue lights, and to increase penalties for violators in order to protect the first responders.

VOLUNTEER JOB PROTECTION WHEN RESPONDING – To enact legislation to provide job protection to volunteer responders when such volunteer is absent from work due to an emergency response to which the volunteer was duly dispatched and to create a procedure addressing accrued leave and reinstatement.

Fiscal

EQUITABLE TREATMENT OF LOSAP AWARDS – To amend the tax law to treat volunteer service award proceeds in the same manner in which pension payments for government employees are treated.

UTILITY RATE REDUCTION – To enact legislation to enable volunteer fire and ambulance companies to receive lower utility rates.

COST RECOVERY FOR FIRE DEPARTMENT AMBULANCE SERVICE – To amend the General Municipal Law to authorize fire departments and companies that provide emergency medical services to establish fees and charge for the services.