

Fire Service Organizations Join Forces to Launch Voter Campaign

*Trio of Fire Service Groups Hopes to Register
100,000 Fire Service Members*

NEW YORK-The Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY), New York State Association of Fire Chiefs (NYSAFC), and the Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York recently launched a comprehensive public service voter outreach campaign. The mission is twofold: to register thousands of fire service members in New York State to vote, and to encourage them to show up to the polls.

This year every member of the New York State Legislature is up for re-election, not to mention the governorship and other statewide offices. FASNY and its partners believe it's important to get firefighters involved in this great opportunity to vote, in order to have a say in New York State government. In addition, firefighters and EMS providers represent a combination of interests unique only to them. When they register to vote, they will become part of a larger group with similar firefighter and EMS concerns. And the beauty of this campaign is that every firefighter and EMS provider can take it a step further, by reaching out to his or her own friends and family. As a result the number of voters **could increase and continue to grow even more.**

While each of these fire service groups are different, they all share some of the same challenges. "It's imperative we work with other fire service groups to get the word out about how important it is to register, and ultimately vote in every election," said David Jacobowitz, First Vice President of FASNY. **"There are more than 100,000 volunteer firefighters and 30,000 volunteer EMS personnel in the state of New York. If you add their family and friends we are talking about a group that could number**

a half million people. This makes for a large voting bloc that can make the difference in close elections from one part of the state to the other. Together, we can make our voice heard at the ballot box."

In order to meet the goals of the campaign, the fire service groups have come up with a number of different ways to not only get the word out about the importance of voting, but to provide different resources to facilitate the voting process.

For example, a new website has been created called www.firefightersvote.com, which explains the voter registration campaign and provides tools so volunteer responders can easily register to vote. In addition, fire departments across the state will have access to materials such as posters, displays, and informational handouts, all designed to get those registered out to vote.

Fire service groups believe this campaign will be an effective way to tap into a large portion of the population.

"In a time when people seem to feel that government is disconnected from their daily lives, there can be no activity of greater importance than participation through voting. Regardless of an individual's party affiliation or how they feel on different issues, the right, and obligation to vote is something that must be taken seriously, and exercised," said Chief Norman Knapp, President of NYSAFC. "This effort will help make it easier for members of New York's Fire Service, both volunteer and career, to exercise their rights as citizens of this great country and state. We at the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs urge each member of the fire service and their families, if you're registered, vote, if you're not registered do so today."

"The Association of Fire District Officers see this as yet another opportunity to work together with FASNY and NYSAFC to educate and encourage participation in our legislative process," said Larry Pierce, President of the Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York. "We believe in these challenging times, an educated commissioner, firefighter or EMS provider can be even more valuable to our local communities. Those who respond to

emergencies in their districts, can work together by voting to ensure the residents receive the best, cost effective care possible.”

Social media such as Facebook will be another source of information for firefighters and EMS personnel. There will be regular postings highlighting the different facets of the campaign.

The program will run for the next several months with the ultimate goal of registering thousands of members of the fire service. In the fall, an emphasis will be placed on getting these registered voters to the polls. If you are a firefighter, and/or EMT you are encouraged to visit www.firefightersvote.com. **You can also log on to www.fasny.com for more information.**

