



*Association of Fire Districts
of the State of New York, Inc.*

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

A.137

by Assemblyman Santabarbara

Exempts active volunteer firefighters from jury duty

January 19, 2023

Hon. Angelo Santabarbara
NYS Assembly
654 LOB
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Assemblyman Santabarbara:

The Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York (AFDNY), a not-for-profit corporation, works to improve the fiscal responsibility, efficiency and effectiveness of fire district management through education, training and advocacy for commissioners and other fire district officials in the 57 counties outside of the City of New York. On behalf of our members, we offer our support of the abovementioned bill.

Over the last several years fire departments and fire districts are finding it more and more difficult to attract and retain firefighters, especially volunteers. The shortage of firefighters, which was exacerbated by COVID, undermines public safety and puts more lives at risk. Fire departments cannot afford to further compromise public safety by losing firefighters who are called to jury duty, sometimes for extended periods of time.

We recognize that jury duty is a public service and a civic duty. However volunteer firefighters perform a critical public safety service as well. This legislation would provide active-duty volunteer firefighters with the same exemption from jury duty that active-duty police and professional firefighters currently receive. It would also help to attract new volunteers and increase the number of active first responders, especially in rural areas.

For the above reasons, we support the passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Preston
President