

**A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED BY
LEGISLATORS RATH, MILLS, LORIGO, DIXON, MORTON, HARDWICK,
LOUGHRAN, GRANT, AND MILLER-WILLIAMS**

Re: Support for FASNY HELP Tuition Reimbursement Program

WHEREAS, the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant was created to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer firefighter organizations to help them increase and maintain the number of trained frontline firefighters available in the community; and

WHEREAS, with the assistance of SAFER grant the Firefighters Association of the State of New York (FASNY) has created the Higher Education Learning Plan, known as FASNY HELP, which provides tuition reimbursement to individuals attending community college for up to 80 credits; and

WHEREAS, FASNY HELP offers up to 100 percent tuition reimbursement, based on academic performance for all eligible student-volunteer firefighters so long as they are members in good standing in one of New York's volunteer fire companies during their school years and service payback period; and

WHEREAS, this program is a win-win, helping thousands of volunteers across New York State cover much of the expense of college while ensuring adequate levels of staffing for volunteer fire departments in our local communities; and

WHEREAS, for the past two years FEMA has not funded the program, forcing FASNY to fully fund HELP. Without FEMA funding, FASNY will not be able to continue offering tuition reimbursement to eligible volunteer firefighters potentially costing volunteer organizations their membership.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that this honorable body hereby supports the FASNY HELP program and urges FEMA to include additional funding from the Department of Homeland Security's Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant to cover the continuation of this program for the 2017 school year; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be sent to the Western New York Delegation to the U.S. Congress and any other party deemed necessary and proper.

Fiscal Impact: None

Fiscal Impact: Positive for Erie County Tax Payers