



Dear Friend:

**O**ur emergency responders provide a vital service to our communities by protecting our lives and property. We are fortunate to have a number of dedicated individuals helping to make communities in our area safer, and representing these brave individuals is one of my highest priorities as a legislator. I have included information on several important bills of interest for emergency responders in this legislative update. As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you might have. Your input is always welcomed and appreciated.

Sincerely,

Senator Richard Alloway II

## Governor Vetoes Legislation to Protect Firefighters

**A**t the end of the 2009-10 legislative session, Governor Rendell vetoed legislation that would have protected firefighters who contract cancer while protecting our communities.

House Bill 1231, which passed both the House and Senate with broad bipartisan support, would have allowed some firefighters who get cancer due to exposure to dangerous smoke and chemicals in the course of their firefighting duties to be eligible to receive workers' compensation benefits.

The legislation included a number of measures to ensure that individuals could not abuse the law. The legislation would have required firefighters to be examined by a doctor prior to engaging in firefighting duties to prevent individuals from claiming benefits based on a pre-existing condition. Also, firefighters who engage in other

activities that are known to cause cancer, such as tobacco use, would not be eligible to receive benefits.

I am deeply disappointed that Governor Rendell did not take action to protect the individuals who defend our lives and property when we need them most. I am hopeful that we can pass this bill again during the 2011-12 legislative session and see it signed into law by our new governor. Many other states have established cancer as an occupational disease, and I am hopeful Pennsylvania can join these states in the near future.



## General Assembly Revamps Emergency Services Law

I was pleased to support legislation that was signed into law during the 2009-10 legislative session to modernize, standardize and improve Pennsylvania's Emergency Medical Services Law.

Statewide, emergency medical services respond to more than 1.8 million calls annually, or approximately one dispatch every 18 seconds. The increased need for services puts added pressure on our emergency services organizations, and Act 37 of 2009 helps allow providers to offer the best, safest and quickest service possible.

The law expands the scope of practice for EMS personnel with all ambulance drivers and attendants certified by the Depart-

ment of Health. This ensures that all providers have access to the necessary training and are authorized to use all of their knowledge and training while saving lives. The law also allows trained and certified EMS personnel to deliver vaccines during serious infectious disease outbreaks such as the H1N1 virus, and requires each EMS organization to have a medical director to oversee care provided.

In addition to expanding the scope of practice, the law updates the Emergency Medical Services Law to reflect the changes in technology and practices since the law was first created in the 1980s. EMS organizations today are made up of highly skilled professionals

that increasingly rely on technology and expanded training, and the law allows state and regional EMS councils to update treatment practices and protocols without the need for legislative action. The law also allows Pennsylvania to enter into agreements with bordering states to help provide services in a disaster event.

The updated law provides a stronger EMS network to ensure there is no time lost due to confusion, antiquated procedures or other conflicts. Time is the most precious commodity in a rescue situation, and it is vital to ensure that there are no unnecessary distractions or hurdles to providing the fastest and most efficient care possible.

## Alloway Supports Bill to Exempt Organizations from Right-to-Know Law

During the 2009-10 legislative session, I supported legislation that would exempt a number of volunteer emergency services organizations from the state's Right-to-Know Law. These organizations dedicate a great deal of time and effort to keep

us safe, and their time could be better served helping their communities instead of being bogged down in paperwork.

Senate Bill 851 would exempt volunteer ambulance services, fire companies, rescue companies, water rescue companies, hazardous materials

response services and emergency medical services from the Right-to-Know Law. The bill would only stipulate that financial records relating to public contracts with municipalities would be subject to the law.

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