



## New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association, Inc.

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May 6, 2021

RE: AN ACT to amend the public health law and the state finance law, in relation to enacting the "New York Health Act"

S.5474 (Rivera)

A.6058 (Gottfried)

SAMUEL A. FRESINA  
President

JAMES J. MCGOWAN  
Secretary-Treasurer

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### CHAPLAIN

REV. JOHN TALLMAN  
40 Collins Place  
Albany, NY 12208

### MEMORANDUM IN OPPOSITION

**The New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association (NYSPPFA), I.A.F.F. AFL-CIO**, a not-for-profit association representing 18,000 fire fighters in 107 Locals in various cities, villages, and towns across New York State, strongly opposes the enactment of this legislation, which would create a single payer, government run, health care system in New York State, known as the New York Health Act.

While the intent of this legislation is to provide comprehensive health care for all New Yorkers, in actuality, it would destroy and malign many of the hard fought battles our brothers and sisters have waged in securing the quality health care our working families need and deserve.

Our members' health benefits are negotiated via our individual local unions and their respective municipalities. Though each contract discussion is unique to one another, health care is consistently a "core issue" for our firefighters, their spouses and children. In many cases, our members have forgone salary increases and other benefits in order to preserve comprehensive health plans. This legislation proposes to eliminate the very benefits we have bargained for. Should the bill prevail, our collectively bargained health coverage will be lost and replaced with government-run care with the state determining which healthcare benefits are available.

Furthermore, the New York Health Act is funded via a graduated payroll tax, with every working member of a firefighter's family subject to the tax. For most of our members, the firefighter's health plan is the family coverage utilized for health care, with zero financial impact to a second source of income.

Under this proposal, a firefighter and their spouse are subject to new taxes, drastically affecting their respective wages and salaries. According to an independent study of the New York Health Act by the RAND Corporation, most firefighters will be taxed between 12.2% – 18.6% on all income (from all sources, including rental income, investments, etc.)





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Given the risks and unique occupational circumstances that firefighters face on the job every day, good health coverage is of the utmost importance. We risk numerous injuries and diseases such as cancer and other behavioral health and post-traumatic stress disorders. We must have access to health plans that will guarantee coverage for those occurrences. The RAND study notes that this bill would create an increase in demand for healthcare that could not all be met, resulting in long waits for appointments, constraints on healthcare technology equipment and changes to doctors' treatment recommendations.

In addition to the New York Health Act's infringement upon our collectively bargained benefits, many questions remain unanswered such as the program's true cost, its ability to contain escalating health care spending, and how this plan will impact our retired members.

Therefore, NYSPFFA strongly opposes the enactment of this legislation.

Respectfully submitted,

Samuel A. Fresina, President  
New York State Professional Fire Fighters Association

