

RESOLUTION NO. 47

URGING THE STATE LEGISLATURE TO ADOPT SENATE BILL NO. 5942-A/ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 9045-A PERMITTING ALBANY COUNTY, ITS MUNICIPALITIES AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO GRANT RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS TO ACTIVE MEMBERS OF VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANIES AND AMBULANCE SERVICES

Introduced: 2/13/06

By Messrs. Gordon, Aidala, Aylward, Beston, Clay, Collins, Commisso, Ms. Connolly, Messrs. Cunningham, Feeney, Frederick, Houghtaling, Infante, Mayo, Ms. McKnight, Messrs. Messercola, Monjeau, Nichols, Reilly, Steck, Ward, Mss. Benedict, Comella, Messrs. Clouse, Tunny and Ms. Prentiss:

WHEREAS, The Albany County Legislature requests the New York State Legislature to enact Senate Bill No. 5942-A/Assembly Bill No. 9045-A that would provide an incentive to recruit and retain volunteer fire and emergency medical personnel through residential property tax exemptions, and

WHEREAS, The state legislation would permit the County and towns, villages and school districts within the County at local option to grant property tax exemptions of 10%, not to exceed \$3,000 multiplied by the latest state equalization rate for the assessing unit, on the primary residence of an active member of volunteer fire companies, fire departments and ambulance services, and

WHEREAS, The state legislation further specifies that the volunteer must have served with the volunteer squad for a minimum of five years and meet qualifications for certification set by the municipality, and permits life-time exemptions for volunteer emergency personnel who accrue more than 20 years of active service, and

WHEREAS, The Legislature believes that the property tax exemption would help combat a persistent and alarming decline in the number of volunteers serving as active responders to fire and medical emergencies, and

WHEREAS, The Legislature further believes the exemptions would recognize the personal sacrifices and dedication of these community-spirited men and women who unselfishly give their time and risk their safety to protect their neighbors without compensation, and

WHEREAS, The Legislature further recognizes that unless recruits are found to replace retiring volunteers and seasoned members are encouraged to continue their volunteer service, the health and safety of citizens served by the volunteer

corps may be jeopardized and local governments would be forced to create paid departments at great cost to taxpayers, and

WHEREAS, The Albany County Legislature defined the criteria for volunteer firefighters and emergency services personnel to qualify for the property tax exemptions in Resolution No. 286 for 1999, when it initially requested State Legislative authority for permission to grant the exemptions, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Albany County Legislature urges the New York State Legislature to enact Senate Bill No. 5942-A/Assembly Bill No. 9045-A permitting Albany County, its municipalities and school districts to grant residential property tax exemptions to active members of volunteer fire companies, fire departments and ambulance services, and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Albany County Legislature is hereby authorized and directed to send certified copies of this resolution to Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, Senator Neil Breslin, Assemblymen Ronald J. Canestrari, John J. McEneny, Robert P. Reilly and Pat M. Casale and to the appropriate County Officials.

*Adopted by unanimous vote. 2/13/06
Messrs. Dawson, Shafer and Ms. Barlette abstained.*