



Monroe County Legislature

TED O'BRIEN  
LEGISLATOR - DISTRICT 17

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Legislature Of  
Monroe County  
Committee Assignment  
Memorializing Referral -L

July 10, 2006

Firefighters, many of them volunteers, risk their lives to protect our communities. It is unthinkable to deny them the funds they need to safely carry out their work. Therefore, we urge you to join us in memorializing the Bush Administration to restore funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program to, at minimum, its 2006 level.

Respectfully submitted,

*Carla M. Palumbo* *Edward M. O'Brien* *Harry B. Bronson*  
Carla M. Palumbo      Edward M. O'Brien      Harry B. Bronson  
Democratic Leader      Legislator - District 17      Assistant Democratic Leader

To the Honorable  
Monroe County Legislature  
407 County Office Building  
39 West Main Street  
Rochester, New York 14614

Re: **Memorializing the Bush Administration to Increase Funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program.**

Honorable Legislators:

Fire departments nationwide are straining their resources to keep pace with increasing responsibilities and the rising costs of modern equipment. Outfitting just one firefighter can cost as much as \$5,000, while the cost of a ladder truck can be well over \$500,000. In addition, specialized training is more frequently required to prepare firefighters to respond to crisis situations.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant program (FIRE grants), administered by the Department of Homeland Security, was created in 2001 to help fire departments meet these costs. It provides career and volunteer fire departments across the country with funds to purchase essential equipment and implement valuable training programs that decrease the risk of injury for firefighters and enable them to better protect the public.

Upstate New York has benefited immensely from these grants. In 2005, Monroe County fire departments received over \$950,000 in FIRE grants, and over the past 5 years the county has seen approximately \$4 million in funding through this program.

Recognizing the value of these grants, Congress authorized \$1 billion for the program for 2007. The Bush Administration, which has consistently under funded the program, has allocated only \$293 million for the program in its 2007 budget, a 46% decrease from the 2006 funding level of \$542 million.

These grants have proven to be crucial to rural, suburban, and urban fire departments, allowing them to purchase specialized equipment and update aging facilities, as well as undertake emergency response training and implement fire prevention programs.

*Travis R. Heider* *Stephanie Polowe Aldersley* *Carrie M. Andrews*  
Travis R. Heider      Stephanie Polowe Aldersley      Carrie M. Andrews  
Legislator - District 14      Legislator - District 16      Legislator - District 21

*Paul E. Haney* *Calvin Lee, Jr.* *C. Stephen Eckel*  
Paul E. Haney      Calvin Lee, Jr.      C. Stephen Eckel  
Legislator - District 23      Legislator - District 25      Legislator - District 26

*Willie J. Lightfoot*  
Willie J. Lightfoot  
Legislator - District 27