

NEW JERSEY LEGISLATURE

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NEWLY FORMED NEW JERSEY LEGISLATIVE FIRE CAUCUS ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP

Group Will Serve as Nonpartisan Advisory Body for N.J. Lawmakers

(TRENTON) –Assemblyman Fred Scalera today announced that the nonpartisan New Jersey Legislative Fire Caucus he has worked to form will be chaired by himself, Assemblyman Dave Rible, Sen. John Girgenti and Senate Republican Leader Tom Kean Jr.

Scalera (D-Essex/Passaic), a career firefighter and former deputy fire chief, said the newly formed caucus would mirror similar efforts in place at the national level, such as the Congressional Fire Caucus, which was formed in 1987.

“New Jersey has a diverse group of firefighters ranging from career firefighters to volunteers, and this caucus will be able to help the Legislature and give lawmakers information to help better understand the needs of firefighters and other first responders,” Scalera said. “The caucus will operate as a nonpartisan advisory body, educating legislators about the needs and challenges of New Jersey’s firefighters and recommending and endorsing legislation. I look forward to it getting it to work.”

“New Jersey’s brave firefighters put themselves in harm’s way in order to protect their communities, and I’m proud to work in the Legislature to provide whatever support we can,” said Girgenti, (D-Passaic and Bergen), chairman of the Senate Law and Public Safety Committee. “I’d like to applaud Assemblyman Scalera for all he has done to advocate on behalf of paid and volunteer firefighters. I believe the fire caucus represents an innovative approach to work together in both houses and across party lines to give firefighters across New Jersey the support they deserve.”

“Firefighting technology and procedures change rapidly,” said Kean (R-Union), a former volunteer firefighter. “This caucus will advise the Legislature as soon as a change in law needs to be made that would help fire departments and firefighters.”

“This caucus will provide a vital line of communication between firefighters and the Legislature that is currently lacking,” said Rible (R-Monmouth) a volunteer firefighter and former first responder.

“The exchange of information on issues vital to the firefighting community should prove to be a very educational and enlightening experience for all parties involved.”

With nearly 70 members of both parties and both houses signed on to be members, the caucus promises to be one of the largest legislative caucuses in the state. The caucus will not operate as a voting block and membership doesn't constrain lawmakers from voting certain ways.

"This is a forum for information exchange," Scalera said. "It will allow elected officials to discuss important issues and ways to develop a consensus on ideas and issues, since fire service issues are, after all, nonpartisan."

Scalera said the first meeting of the caucus is being planned for March.