From: FDNY Local 2507

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Citing "Fiscal Issue" Governor Vetoes NYC Emergency Response Staffing Bill

$25 Million Deemed Too Much to Spend on FDNY EMS to Improve Staffing & Safety

New York, NY – Governor Hochul has vetoed a bill that passed unanimously in the New York State Senate and Assembly, to ensure ambulances in New York City are adequately staffed, stating, "it would pose a fiscal issue" for the city.

The price that would supposedly break the bank was $25 million out of FDNY's $2.6 billion budget. Currently only 14% goes to fund EMS, compared to 16.2% in FY2024, illustrating what the union says is a significant disinvestment by the Adams Administration in FDNY EMS. For calendar year 2024, total FDNY emergencies were approximately 1.9 million, with nearly 86% of those or 1,630,446 being EMS medical responses. The city's fiscal year 2026 budget is $115.9 billion.

The staffing bill was inspired by the tragic murder of FDNY Lieutenant Allison Russo on October 7, 2022. Working as a Supervisor Paramedic, Lt. Russo was working alone on the day of her death.

The bill (S6698/A7356), sponsored by Senator Robert Jackson and Assemblymember Stacey Pheffer Amato, would have mandated that EMS units responding to 911 emergency medical calls in cities with more than one million people be staffed by two qualified medical first responders for the provision of needed medical services and the safety of the responders, who are very regularly assaulted or threatened with physical harm on the job.

"Amending the law would ensure that supervisors working in EMS vehicles would work in teams just as EMTs and paramedics do," **said Oren Barzilay, president of FDNY EMS Local 2507, the union representing New York City's EMTs and paramedics**. "It's saddening that the murder of Lt. Russo was not evident enough to show the dangers of our job that legislation to protect our members was vetoed."

The bill would have permitted this to be a mix of any of the following qualified staff: two

EMTs, two Advanced EMTs (i.e., Paramedics), or a supervisor with another who is an EMT or Advanced EMT (i.e., Paramedics). The measure unanimously passed the State Senate with a vote of 59-0.

FDNY EMS Local 2507, the union representing New York City's EMTs and paramedics, say this change is necessary for not only patient care, but importantly for the safety and security of the city's medical first responders that face hazardous conditions every day in the line of duty.

"The total lack of investment by City Hall in EMS is an ongoing crisis that is hurting New Yorkers. Governor Hochul's veto message says that money is more important than the safety of the men and women of the busiest EMS agency in the world," **continued Barzilay**. "New York City continually prioritizes other spending initiatives and relegates public safety to the back seat, while EMS members are bloodied, attacked and mugged in countless dangerous situations."

In her veto message, despite acknowledging that the safety of emergency medical service personnel is of critical importance, the Governor explained, "New York City would have to hire an additional 290
emergency medical technicians at a cost of $25 million annually to meet these standards."

As currently written, the public health law specifies that the minimum staffing level of EMS units is limited to only a single responder, while complex, urban environments like New York City necessitate standard protocol for ambulances to be staffed with two responders.

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