

## House Republican Press Release

April 21, 2008  
Press Office: 860-240-8700

### HOUSE APPROVES BILL TO BENEFIT VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANIES



#### *Legislation Sponsored By Rep. Chapin Would Promote Volunteer Service From Career Firefighters*

On Thursday, April 17, the House of Representatives approved legislation co-sponsored by Rep. Clark Chapin, R-New Milford, that would prohibit municipal firefighter contracts from banning paid firefighters from serving in volunteer fire companies. House Bill 5646, An Act Concerning Volunteer Service By Paid Emergency Personnel Or Paid Firefighters, now moves to the State Senate for consideration.

According to Rep. Chapin, many firefighters who hold paid positions for municipalities have expressed a desire to serve in volunteer fire companies in the towns where they reside. However, a number of municipal contracts prohibit this volunteerism.

HB 5646 would specifically prohibit municipal firefighter contracts from banning firefighters or paid emergency personnel from serving as active members of a volunteer fire department, during personal time, in the municipality where they live. It allows municipalities to ask the state Department of Labor to help resolve any issues arising from such municipal fire agreements.

"We're fortunate to have such dedicated volunteers in New Milford, including those who have also chosen to make firefighting their career," said Rep. Chapin. "I note that during the Thursday afternoon debate on this bill, our firefighters were responding to a house fire. Allowing our career firefighters an opportunity to respond, especially during a weekday, should help to ensure an adequate number of respondents, which in turn helps to ensure public safety."