

## House Republican Press Release

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### **Reps Labriola, Greene: Paid Firefighters Could Join Local Volunteer Depts Under Bill Okayed by State House**



#### ***Bill Passed Thursday now Goes to Senate for Final Legislative Approval***

Firefighters employed by municipalities with full-time fire departments could join volunteer fire departments in their home towns under legislation approved today by the state House, said state representatives David K. Labriola and Len Greene, both of whom cosponsored the bill.

The measure (House Bill 5646), which passed the House on a 127 – 19 vote Thursday, now goes to the state Senate for final legislative approval.

“Firefighters who work for full-time municipal departments but live in neighboring towns that have volunteer fire departments have been asking for this legislation for many years,” said Representative Labriola, R-131<sup>st</sup> District. “Unfortunately, many firefighters who would like to volunteer for their local fire companies cannot do so because of prohibitions written into their contracts with the municipalities where they are employed. This bill would allow firefighters who want to give back to their communities to do so in the best way they can.”

“Local volunteer fire departments often have problems finding people who are available to answer fire calls during the day because many of their members work in neighboring communities,” said Representative Greene, R-105<sup>th</sup> District. “Because paid firefighters who do not live in the municipalities where they are employed often are at home when they are not working a day shift, they can respond to fire emergencies that take place during those off hours. Volunteerism is a great tradition in our country. Not to allow paid firefighters to volunteer seems downright un-American to me.”

Both legislators represent communities that rely on volunteer departments for fire protection.