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2015-2016 Regular Sessions

I N   S E N A T E

January 8, 2015

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Introduced by Sens. FUNKE, NOZZOLIO, YOUNG -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Local Government -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the volunteer firefighters' benefit law, in relation to the payment of benefits

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1     Section 1.     Section 8 of the volunteer firefighters' benefit law, as  
2 amended by chapter 574 of the laws of 1998, is amended to read as  
3 follows:  
4     S 8. Permanent total disability benefits. 1. In the case of total  
5 disability adjudged to be permanent the volunteer firefighter shall be  
6 paid four hundred dollars for each week [during the continuance there-  
7 of]. Permanent total disability, within the meaning of this section,  
8 shall exist only if the earning capacity of the volunteer firefighter  
9 has been lost permanently and totally as the result of the injury. The  
10 loss of both hands, or both arms, or both feet, or both legs, or both  
11 eyes, or any two thereof, shall, in the absence of conclusive proof to  
12 the contrary, constitute permanent total disability, but in all other  
13 cases permanent total disability shall be determined in accordance with  
14 the facts. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this chapter, an  
15 injured volunteer firefighter disabled due to the loss or total loss of  
16 use of both eyes, or both hands, or both arms, or both feet, or both  
17 legs, or any two thereof shall not suffer any diminution of such weekly  
18 benefit by engaging in business or employment provided his or her weekly  
19 earnings or wages, when combined with his or her weekly benefit shall  
20 not be in excess of [six] EIGHT hundred dollars; and further provided  
21 that the application of this section shall not result in reduction of  
22 benefits which an injured volunteer firefighter who is disabled due to  
23 the loss or total loss of use of both eyes, or both hands, or both arms,

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets  
[ ] is old law to be omitted.

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1 or both feet, or both legs, or any two thereof would otherwise be enti-  
2 tled to under any other provisions of this article.

3 2. BENEFITS RECEIVED PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION ONE OF THIS SECTION AFTER  
4 JANUARY FIRST, TWO THOUSAND SIXTEEN SHALL BE ADJUSTED YEARLY ON FEBRUARY  
5 FIRST BY A PERCENTAGE EQUAL TO THE PERCENT INCREASE IN THE PREVIOUS  
6 YEAR'S CONSUMER PRICE INDEX.

7 S 2. Subdivision 5 of section 51 of the volunteer firefighters' bene-  
8 fit law, as renumbered by chapter 246 of the laws of 2006, is renumbered  
9 subdivision 6 and a new subdivision 5 is added to read as follows:

10 5. THE INSURANCE CARRIER OR ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYING THE BENEFIT  
11 INCREASE PROVIDED IN SECTION EIGHT OF THIS CHAPTER SHALL CLAIM FOR SUCH  
12 BENEFIT INCREASE REIMBURSEMENT FROM THE SPECIAL FUND FOR REOPENED CASES  
13 COMMENCING ONE YEAR FROM THE DATE OF THE FIRST SUCH PAYMENT AND ANNUALLY  
14 THEREAFTER WHILE SUCH PAYMENTS CONTINUE, ON A FORM PRESCRIBED BY THE  
15 CHAIR.

16 S 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall apply to weekly  
17 benefit periods that commence after January 1, 2016.