STATE OF NEW YORK

9779

IN ASSEMBLY

February 11, 2020

Introduced by M. of A. THIELE -- read once and referred to the Committee on Governmental Operations

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to creating the New York state volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention task force

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The executive law is amended by adding a new section 159-d-1 to read as follows:

§ 159-d-1. New York state volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention task force. There is hereby created the volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention task force whose membership shall consist of the chair or his or her designee; the commissioner of homeland security and emergency services or his or her designee; the commissioner of education or his or her designee; the chancellor of the state university of New York or his or her designee; the commissioner of taxation and finance or his or her designee; the commissioner of labor or his or her designee; the president of the Fireman's Association of the State of New York or his or her designee; the president of the Association of Fire Districts or his or her designee; the president of the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs or his or her designee; the president of the New York State Fire Coordinators or his or her designee; the temporary president of the senate or his or her designee; the speaker of the assembly or his or her designee; the minority leader of the senate or his or her designee; and the minority leader of the assembly or his or her designee. The governor shall appoint the chair of the task force. The task force shall report to the governor, the speaker of the assembly and the temporary president of the senate no later than one year after the effective date of this section. Such report shall include, but not be limited to, recommendations concerning:

1. Firefighter 1 training, and all other firefighter training offered by the office of fire prevention and control, and delivery methods to enhance and streamline training including the use of distance learning;

2. The utilization of community colleges, BOCES or state accredited high schools to train firefighters and the creation of pilot programs

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

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within community colleges or BOCES that will offer Firefighter 1 certification upon completion;

3. The creation of a dedicated bureau within the office of fire prevention and control responsible for recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters;

4. Tax incentives and volunteer firefighter benefits currently provided and recommendations as to these or new programs;

5. Analysis of current recruitment and retention programs successfully being utilized by other states and recommendations as to adoption of similar programs in New York; and

6. Identification and recruitment incentives to assist in the recruitment of volunteer firefighters from under-represented and at-risk populations.

All appointees of the task force shall be made no later than thirty days after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing authority. The task force shall meet no less than six times prior to issuing its recommendations. The members of the task force shall serve without compensation, except that members shall be allowed their necessary and actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties under this section. The department of homeland security and emergency services shall provide the task force with such facilities, assistance, and data as will enable such task force to carry out its powers and duties.

§ 2. This act shall take effect immediately.