

Washington, DC -- U.S Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) announced today that he is an original cosponsor of the Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act, H.R. 943, which would provide tax relief for volunteer emergency responders.

“Firefighters and emergency medical responders put their lives on the line to keep our communities safe and secure,” said Arcuri, a member of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus. “The Volunteer Responder Incentive Protection Act would provide a valuable incentive to recruit and retain first responders in localities like Greene and Sherburne, as well as the many others across my district, that rely on volunteer services. By making a change at the federal level we can help localities in Upstate New York, and across the country, justly reward the brave men and women who volunteer for the most valuable form of public service.”

The legislation would exempt property tax abatements and other incentives offered to volunteer emergency responders from federal taxation. Some states, including New York, have existing tax incentives. However, the Internal Revenue Service has ruled that property tax abatements are considered federally taxable income. H.R. 943 responds to this conflict by changing the federal tax code to ensure that tax incentives provided to volunteer firefighters and emergency responders will be exempt from federal taxation.

The International Association of Fire Chiefs found that the number of volunteer firefighters dropped ten percent between 1984 and 2003. H.R. 943 would provide a much needed incentive for localities to use in volunteer recruitment and retention - increasing the ranks of volunteer emergency responders, whose declining numbers over the last 20 years have left a vulnerable gap in many local departments.

H.R. 943 is supported by the Congressional Fire Services Institute, the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the National Volunteer Fire Council.

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