

18A:64A-79

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY CHECKLIST

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LAWS OF: 2005 **CHAPTER:** 217

NJSA: 18A:64A-79 (Concerns the award of county college credit to certain firefighters)

BILL NO: A1479 (Substituted for S339)

SPONSOR(S): Wisniewski and others

DATE INTRODUCED: Pre-filed

COMMITTEE: **ASSEMBLY:** Education

SENATE: Law and Public Safety and Veterans' Affairs

AMENDED DURING PASSAGE: No

DATE OF PASSAGE: **ASSEMBLY:** May 24, 2004

SENATE: June 27, 2005

DATE OF APPROVAL: September 7, 2005

FOLLOWING ARE ATTACHED IF AVAILABLE:

[FINAL TEXT OF BILL](#) (Original version of bill enacted)

A1479

[SPONSOR'S STATEMENT:](#) (Begins on page 2 of original bill) [Yes](#)

COMMITTEE STATEMENT: **ASSEMBLY:** [Yes](#)

SENATE: [Yes](#)

FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT: No

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE: No

S339

[SPONSOR'S STATEMENT:](#) (Begins on page 2 of original bill) [Yes](#)

COMMITTEE STATEMENT: **ASSEMBLY:** No

SENATE: [Yes](#)

FLOOR AMENDMENT STATEMENT: No

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE: No

VETO MESSAGE: No

[GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING:](#) [Yes](#)

FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

To check for circulating copies, contact New Jersey State Government Publications at the State Library (609) 278-2640 ext. 103 or

<mailto:refdesk@njstatelib.org>

REPORTS:

No

HEARINGS:

No

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:

Yes

"Volunteer firefighters can now get college credits in academy classes," 9-9-2005 Star Ledger, p.25

IS 10/19/07

P.L. 2005, CHAPTER 217, *approved September 7, 2005*
Assembly, No. 1479

1 **AN ACT** concerning the award of county college credit to certain
2 firefighters and supplementing chapter 64A of Title 18A of the New
3 Jersey Statutes.

4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

7

8 1. The Legislature finds and declares that: through programs and
9 courses county fire academies work to enhance the ability of
10 firefighters to deal more effectively with fire and related emergencies;
11 county fire academy courses offer students an opportunity to grow
12 professionally and to increase their knowledge and skills to provide a
13 safe and effective response to their communities; and certain courses
14 offered by county fire academies are equal in difficulty to those at the
15 college level.

16 The Legislature, therefore, further finds that it is appropriate for
17 county colleges to award college credits to firefighters for certain
18 courses completed in county fire academies.

19

20 2. a. Any person who successfully completes a course at a county
21 fire academy shall receive county college credit for the course if: the
22 county college determines after a review of the curriculum of the
23 course offered by the county fire academy that the curriculum is
24 similar to the curriculum of a course offered in the county college's fire
25 science program; and upon completion of the course, the person
26 successfully completes an examination approved by the county college.
27 The county college shall waive any credit-by-exam fee the college may
28 charge.

29 b. The county fire academy and county college of a county shall
30 work jointly to identify courses at the county fire academy which offer
31 a curriculum similar to that of courses included in the county college's
32 fire science program.

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34 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

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38 Requires county colleges to award college credits to firefighters for
39 certain courses completed at county fire academies.

ASSEMBLY, No. 1479

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 211th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2004 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman JOHN S. WISNIEWSKI

District 19 (Middlesex)

Assemblyman PATRICK DIEGNAN, JR.

District 18 (Middlesex)

Assemblyman FREDERICK SCALERA

District 36 (Bergen, Essex and Passaic)

Co-Sponsored by:

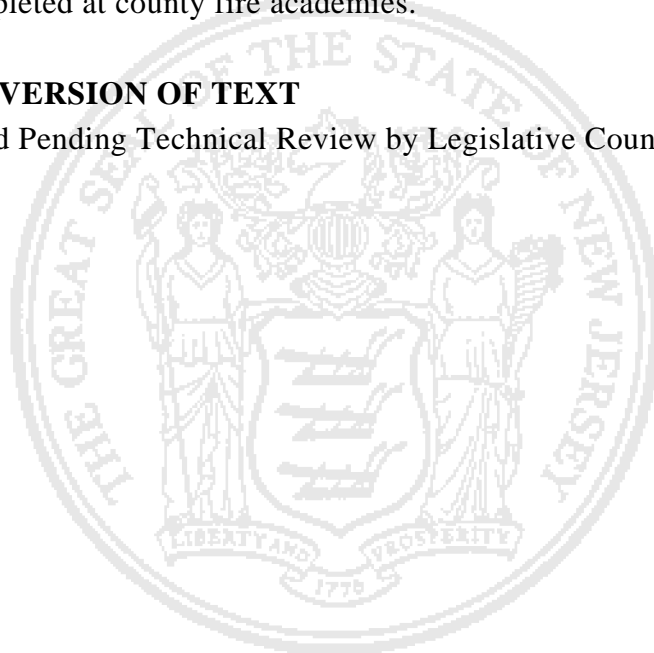
Assemblywoman Stender

SYNOPSIS

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CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



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37 STATEMENT

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39 This bill requires county colleges to award college credits to
40 firefighters for certain courses completed in county fire academies.

41 Under the bill, any person who successfully completes a course at
42 a county fire academy will receive county college credit for the course
43 if: the county college determines after a review of the curriculum of
44 the course offered by the county fire academy that the curriculum is
45 similar to the curriculum of a course offered in the county college's fire
46 science program; and upon completion of the course the person

1 successfully completes an examination approved by the county college.
2 The county college is required to waive any credit-by-exam fee the
3 college may charge.

4 The bill also requires the county fire academy and county college
5 of a county to work jointly to identify courses at the county fire
6 academy which offer a curriculum similar to that of courses included
7 in the county college's fire science program.

8 Through programs and courses county fire academies work to
9 enhance the ability of firefighters to deal more effectively with fire and
10 related emergencies, and offer firefighters the opportunity to increase
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12 their communities. Certain courses offered by county fire academies
13 are equal in difficulty to those at the college level.

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1479

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: FEBRUARY 19, 2004

The Assembly Education Committee favorably reports Assembly Bill No. 1479.

This bill requires county colleges to award college credits to firefighters for certain courses completed in county fire academies. Under the bill, any person who successfully completes a course at a county fire academy will receive county college credit for the course if: the county college determines after a review of the curriculum of the course offered by the county fire academy that the curriculum is similar to the curriculum of a course offered in the county college's fire science program; and upon completion of the course the person successfully completes an examination approved by the county college. The county college is required to waive any credit-by-exam fee the college may charge.

The bill also requires the county fire academy and county college to work jointly to identify courses at the county fire academy which offer a curriculum similar to that of courses included in the county college's fire science program.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2004-2005 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

SENATE LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY AND VETERANS'
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1479

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 5, 2005

The Senate Law and Public Safety and Veterans' Affairs Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1479.

This bill requires county colleges to award college credits to firefighters for certain courses completed in county fire academies. Under the bill, any person who successfully completes a course at a county fire academy will receive county college credit for the course if: the county college determines after a review of the curriculum of the course offered by the county fire academy that the curriculum is similar to the curriculum of a course offered in the county college's fire science program; and upon completion of the course the person successfully completes an examination approved by the county college. The county college is required to waive any credit-by-exam fee the college may charge.

The bill also requires the county fire academy and county college to work jointly to identify courses at the county fire academy which offer a curriculum similar to that of courses included in the county college's fire science program.

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Senate Bill No. 339.

SENATE, No. 339

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 211th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2004 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator PAUL SARLO

District 36 (Bergen, Essex and Passaic)

Senator JOHN A. GIRGENTI

District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

SYNOPSIS

Requires county colleges to award college credits to firefighters for certain courses completed at county fire academies.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/6/2005)

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S339 SARLO, GIRGENTI

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SENATE LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY AND VETERANS'
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 339

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DATED: MAY 5, 2005

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As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to Assembly Bill No. 1479.

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

Contact: Kelley Heck
609-777-2600

RELEASE: September 07, 2005

Codey Signs Bills Aiding Volunteer Emergency Responders

Firefighters Will Receive College Credits for Volunteer Training

(TRENTON) –Acting Governor Richard J. Codey today signed A1479 and A2998, bills that will provide numerous benefits to emergency personnel by helping volunteers respond to emergencies and improving education and training opportunities for volunteer firefighters.

“In today’s fast paced society, we often fail to appreciate and thank the people that sacrifice to keep us safe,” said Codey. “These men and women juggle the demands of career and family while bravely putting their life on the line. As elected officials, we must do everything we can to honor their services and help these volunteers fulfill their duties.”

Codey signed the bill at the Hamilton Avenue Firehouse in Hasbrouck Heights where he was joined by bill sponsors Senator Paul A. Sarlo (D-Bergen, Essex, Passaic) and Assembly members Frederick Scalera (D-Essex), Patrick Diegnan, Jr. (D-Middlesex) and Jeff Van Drew (D-Cape May). Also joining them were more than 200 volunteer firefighters, including members of the Southern Bergen County Fire Chiefs Association. Other bill sponsors include Senators Andrew R. Ciesla (R-Monmouth, Ocean), John A. Girgenti (D-Bergen, Passaic) and Fred Madden (D-Camden, Gloucester) and Assemblyman John S. Wisniewski (D-Middlesex).

Bill A-1479 will increase the educational opportunities available for fire fighters, while also helping them in their pursuit of a college degree. County colleges will now be required to award college credits to firefighters for completion of certain courses in county fire academies. The colleges will work together with fire academies to identify courses at the academy, which offer a curriculum similar to that of courses included in the college’s fire program. The law will go into April 1, 2006.

“The men and women who pursue careers as some of New Jersey's Bravest learn many valuable lessons at their county firefighter academies that serve them well professionally later in life,” said Sarlo. “If the goal of community college is to prepare students for professional life, there is no reason why the courses taught at firefighter academies should not translate to credits towards a degree for those seeking to become professional firefighters.”

“Firefighters demonstrate their bravery when they run into a burning building in order to

save our lives and our property,” said Girgenti, Chairman of the Senate Law, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee. “The same men and women who graduated from the fire academies will now be able to earn credit for the work they do everyday. We need to promote education, and provide opportunities for our firefighters to work toward a degree.”

Bill A-2998 will help volunteers respond to emergencies by correcting a litany of legal ambiguities surrounding the use of blue flashing lights on civilian response vehicles. Under previous law, the vast majority of blue lights used by volunteer emergency responders were technically illegal because they are too bright. However, the lights that the law did allow were too weak to effectively warn drivers and pedestrians to free up the road, which ultimately posed a safety hazard.

The new bill will resolve these legal ambiguities and permit volunteer first responders to install larger contemporary light bars on response vehicles. The bill will go into effect immediately and the Motor Vehicle Commission will be responsible for issuing specifications for the equipment and creating permits for volunteers.

“Volunteer firefighters are putting enough on the line as it is when they respond to an emergency call,” said Van Drew, a volunteer fireman and a life member of the New Jersey Firemen’s Association. “State laws should be written to the effect of aiding these unsung heroes instead of working against their efforts.”

“By giving our volunteer emergency responders access to the appropriate tools of the trade, we can increase response time, especially in municipalities that rely heavily on volunteer services to protect and serve their residents,” said Sarlo. “Emergency lights will allow our volunteers to move quickly through traffic and avoid compounding the emergency by getting into a car crash on the way to a call.”

"This bill helps ensure the safety of our critical volunteer firefighters and rescue squads. At the same time, it enables local residents and drivers to better recognize a vehicle heading to a fire or emergency site," said Senator Madden, D-Camden and Gloucester.

“This is an alarming case where state law is completely out of step with reality,” said Scalera, a former volunteer firefighter who currently serves as deputy fire chief of the Nutley Fire Department. “The blue lights that are permitted under state law are virtually nonexistent. They would be so weak that they would literally constitute a safety hazard.”

Scalera also serves as deputy coordinator for Essex County’s Office of Emergency Management. In this capacity, he has helped coordinate the decontamination unit that was deployed today as part of the state’s taskforce to assist the Gulf Coast region ravaged by Hurricane Katrina. The Nutley Fire Department also sent one of its firefighters as part of the statewide taskforce.