

May 1, 2021

A Vote for the Pennsylvania Fire Fighter Loan Referendum Marks a Vote for Strong Public Safety

On May 18, Pennsylvania voters will go to the polls to vote on the statewide referendum to make their communities safer and their fire departments more efficient by allowing municipal fire and emergency medical services access to low-interest loans. This ballot question will allow all fire departments to apply for loans from an already existing state-run program.

This referendum is good for Pennsylvania, and the leading fire safety experts agree. The Pennsylvania Professional Fire Fighters Association, the Pennsylvania Career Fire Chiefs Association, the Fireman's Association of the State of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania Fire and Emergency Services Institute all recognize the importance of this ballot question and encourage voters to support the measure.

Over the past year, firefighters and EMS professionals have answered the call to serve our communities in one of the most difficult environments in recent memory. They have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, adapting to the needs of their community and stretching their resources as far as they can go. Faced with this challenge, these professionals rose above to continue delivering the services their neighbors expect. These efforts have strained budgets for many fire departments across our state.

The critical funds provided by the referendum will help your neighborhood firefighters replace outdated or unsafe equipment and update buildings so they can continue to keep your family safe when you dial 9-1-1. These funds are specific in their use – equipment and capital investments only.

This referendum will help all Pennsylvania fire departments meet increased demands for a higher level of service in the communities they serve – and best of all, it does so without raising taxes or hurting the current departments eligible to apply. The fund has 47 million dollars in it and by voting yes only adds 22 fire departments to the more than 2,000 departments already eligible.

Since 1975, the state fire commissioner has administered the loan program, using tax dollars from all residents to help volunteer fire companies. This May referendum simply acknowledges that since all residents pay into the fund, all fire departments should be able to use the program to purchase the tools their firefighters need, including fire trucks. Voting yes will create a fair and equitable program that serves all residents.

This referendum is about safety and efficiency. Allowing all Pennsylvania fire departments access to these low-interest loans means they can focus more of their budgets on keeping firefighters on the job – not paying off high-interest loans or passing municipal bonds.

Join your neighbors, firefighters, and fire chiefs from across the state. On May 18, vote for safety, fairness, and efficiency. Vote for the statewide referendum, Act 2020-91 Making Municipal Fire and Emergency Medical Services Companies Eligible for Loans.

Respectfully,

J.T. Pennington

President Pennsylvania Professional Fire Fighters Association

jpennington@ppffa.org

Jay Delaney

President Pennsylvania Career Fire Chiefs Association

jdelaney@wilkes-barre.pa.us