

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs the “Dominick Marino PFRS Enhanced Benefits for Surviving Spouses Act”

01/7/2021

TRENTON – Today, Governor Phil Murphy signed S487, also known as the “Dominick Marino PFRS Enhanced Benefits for Surviving Spouses Act”. The legislation is named after Dominick Marino, a former professional firefighter and past President of the Professional Firefighters Association of New Jersey (PFANJ), who passed away earlier last year. The new law will provide financial security for a member’s surviving spouse by ensuring that the accidental death benefit provided by the Police and Firemen’s Retirement System cannot be below \$50,000 annually.

“A fierce advocate who put his heart and soul into everything he did for his PFANJ brothers and sisters, Dominick was a dear friend to me and to so many of us,” **said Governor Murphy**. “It is my great honor to sign this bill to cement Dominick’s legacy and help ensure that our first responders’ loved ones who are left behind are taken care of.”

“The health and well-being of his firefighters, EMTs, paramedics, as well as their families, were very important to our father. He continued to work hard and fight for them every day,” **said the Marino Family**. “This bill is just one example of his hard work and dedication to them, and we are honored to have this bill named after him.”

“Senate Bill 487, named after Past-President Dominick Marino exemplifies ‘Donnie’ and all that he represented as President of the Professional Firefighters Association of New Jersey (PFANJ) before his untimely death in April 2020,” **said Steve McConlogue, President of the Professional Firefighters Association of New Jersey**. “He was the driving force behind this bill and felt passionately about ensuring that the families of those who made the ultimate sacrifice are taken care of regardless of years of service. As firefighters, we show up each and every day knowing the danger and risks involved and, just as we believe in the importance of protecting and serving the members of our communities, we believe in taking care of each other. This bill helps to ensure we are doing just that. Thank you to the members of the PFANJ who have worked tirelessly to help move this bill across the finish line and to the members of the General Assembly and Senate for passing this bill unanimously. Thank you Governor Murphy for signing this bill into law.”

“Members of the public safety community put their lives on the line every day to protect and save the lives of every person in New Jersey,” **said Senator Brian Stack**. “So, it is absolutely a tragedy when they die in the line of duty, and even worse when they leave behind a surviving spouse. This is why Senator Sacco and I worked to enhance the accidental death benefit of the Police and Firemen’s Retirement System. Collectively, we have to look out for these families when they lose loved ones.”

“As a mayor, it breaks my heart when I read about the accidental death of a police officer or firefighter,” **said Senator Nicholas Sacco**. “And if I find out they left behind a surviving family, my first instinct is to do whatever I can to help regardless of where in the state they may be. Enhancing the accidental death benefit in their pension to provide a minimum will prevent them from having financial issues due to the loss of their spouse.”

“Too many of our first responders, unfortunately, give their lives to keep their communities safe. We will never be able to fully give back to those brave heroes, but the very least we can do is make sure their families are cared for,” **said Assemblymembers Angelica Jimenez, Pedro Mejia, and Carol Murphy in a joint statement**. “Expanding the accidental death pension will benefit many families of fallen police officers and firefighters. It’s another way we can continue to express our utmost respect and gratitude for their loved one’s service.”

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