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SENATOR GATTI SELECTED AS 2018 LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR BY THE PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF LOUISIANA

District 36 State Senator Ryan Gatti is the Professional Fire Fighters Association of Louisiana's (PFFALA) 2018 Legislator of the Year. He was recognized for his continuous contributions to firefighters across the state at the organization's 73rd Annual Convention on February 9, 2019.

"Senator Gatti takes a no-nonsense approach in representing his constituents as well as all first responders throughout the State of Louisiana," said PFFALA President Chad Major. "He listens intently to our concerns, and although he is a very intelligent person, he allows good common sense to prevail. He is not only a compassionate man of God, but also a fighter for firefighters. It is our honor to recognize him for his efforts and it is our privilege to call him friend and brother!"



"The Bossier City Firefighters are truly honored that our local senator is the recipient of this prestigious award and to have been a part of the ceremony. Senator Gatti has not stopped carrying our flag since the day he first arrived in Baton Rouge. His strong Christian values reflect those of our membership and we are proud to have Senator Gatti honored by our collective brothers and sisters throughout our great state," added Matt Lauterbach, President of the Bossier City Firefighters.

Throughout his tenure as state senator, Sen. Gatti has supported firefighters around the state by sponsoring legislation benefitting first responders. In the 2016 Regular Legislative Session, Sen. Gatti's *Act 332* lessened the penalties for first responders who engage in political activities, requiring a suspension rather than termination on a first offense. Senator Gatti went to bat for first responders again in 2017, authoring *Act 287* to expand workers' compensation benefits for firefighters to include any type of cancer with a work-related origin.

Senator Gatti has also pushed measures to increase supplemental pay for certain eligible first responders, however that effort has yet to make it through the legislative process.

“I am incredibly honored to receive this award,” said Sen. Gatti. “It is not only my job, but my privilege, to assist our first responders in whatever way possible. These men and women stand on the front lines of disaster in our state. They deserve our utmost respect and support.”

Senator Gatti plans to continue this support for firefighters in the 2019 Regular Legislative Session by sponsoring legislation to assist first responders dealing with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Senator Gatti says the bill he plans to file will allow first responders to file a PTSD-related claim with workman’s compensation as an occupational disease.

“It is critical that first responders get the help they need. They see and deal with things on the job that many of us cannot imagine. Research shows that PTSD, if treated early, does not have to be permanent. It is my hope that this measure will make the ‘get over it’ mentality a thing of the past and encourage these men and women to reach out to get the help they need,” said Sen. Gatti.

The Professional Fire Fighters Association of Louisiana has represented the career professional fire fighters throughout the state since 1940.

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