

2022 VOTER GUIDE



**FIREFIGHTERS
AND EMS FUND**

ELECT PRO-FIRE BOARD MEMBERS

In politics, it is often said that “personnel is policy.” While we cannot decide who elected officials staff their offices with, we can do our part by electing the right leaders to public office.

Understand where your elected officials stand on the issues before voting them into office. Ask about their opinions regarding local emergency services and inquire as to whether they intend to suggest changes.

At the local level, one of the most effective positions for enacting change for emergency services is that of board member.

Board members vote on local policy, perhaps most importantly, on budget. These votes can create or eliminate paid positions, impact a department’s decision to bring forth an ask (usually in the form of a levy) to voters, thus significantly impacting whether a department gets needed funding for things like new trucks.



Electing pro-fire candidates is a crucial first step in advancing the needs of local departments. To vote effectively, voters must first educate themselves on the issues facing their local fire services.

Then, when vetting candidates in local elections this year, voters can discern whether that candidate is the right fit. Question them on local policy issues, make them commit to a position!

VOTE YES: PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

PPE comes in many forms. Post the height of the Coronavirus Pandemic, when most people think of PPE- medical grade gloves and masks come to mind, but PPE for firefighters includes any form of protective equipment.

In recent years, research has greatly improved the efficacy of these items and things like hoods, which firefighters wear beneath their helmets, have evolved from being a possible cause of throat and mouth cancers to a true mitigator with the introduction of the non-permeable membrane. Every firefighter deserves a hood that doesn’t contribute to cancer, but instead reduces the risk of contracting it.

As recently as February of this year, the state of Colorado brought forward a bill to earmark \$5 million towards firefighter PPE as it was revealed many of the volunteers in that state lack adequate PPE.

Firehouse notes that as much as 80% of the state's firefighters are volunteer responders.

While Covid-19 hastened the government's response to the PPE crisis, it has existed for years amongst our nation's firefighters. One-time measures simply will not address the systemic shortages suffered by departments across the country.

This election cycle, it is essential to nominate candidates who understand this reality, lobby officials willing to address this problem, and to pass referendums which would provide funding for acquiring these essential tools.

GET INVOLVED

Help your local committee in any way you can to pass a ballot measure. There are many different hats to wear when supporting fire and EMS tax levies. Using your professional experience in the fields of law, accounting, and social media can make the difference between your department gaining or in fact losing out on already secured revenue should the tax levy be a renewal.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Get out and vote! Elect leaders who understand what it takes to be a firefighter or first responder. Consistent and real-world training opportunities, along with adequate and up-to-date equipment are key to having effective fire departments. Emergency Medical Technicians who are well versed in the challenges they will face in an emergency can be the difference between life and death for both the patient and the responder.
- Support ballot measures that will improve or replace facilities and equipment, and pay close attention to when these resources were last updated. Your local fire department will not request more from the community unless it is truly needed. Many departments go years or even decades with the same facilities or equipment, and every request they make should be seriously evaluated.
- Consider who serves on your community's Fire Commission. These individuals have a direct responsibility to ensure your community is protected. Make sure commission members have the knowledge and experience required to make informed decisions.