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Submitted Testimony in Opposition to Intro 1093-A

By Stephen J. Cassidy, President

NYC Council Committee – Committee on Civil Service and Labor
Michael Nelson, Acting Chairperson
December 14th, 2009

Good afternoon Chairman Nelson, Council Member Comrie and members of the committee. I apologize that I can not be there to speak before you in person today. My name is Stephen Cassidy and I represent more than 9000 Firefighters and Fire Marshals here in New York City. The citizens of New York City deserve the very best firefighters that can be hired. We have testified on this subject before and have offered many suggestions on how best to accomplish this goal. Most of them have been ignored by this Administration. As the President of the UFA, I have done something no other UFA official has done before, by speaking at High Schools with a predominantly minority population about becoming a member of New York's Bravest. In addition we have advocated recruiting directly from the military and high school athletic teams.

We must oppose the granting of additional credit for an applicant that attends a NYC High School or obtains a GED certificate from a NYC institution on numerous grounds. We already have a five point city residency credit in place. Better verification of eligibility for this credit would be more prudent than granting a credit for anyone that attends a NYC High School.

There are many private High Schools in NYC that a large percentage of the student population comes from outside of the five boroughs. Some of those schools are as high as 50%. This credit would benefit applicants that do not live in NYC but were fortunate enough to attend a High School in NYC. In addition there are other schools that are outside of NYC that NYC residents attend. These students would be at a disadvantage for attending a school outside NYC even though they live within the five boroughs. While Intro 1093-a may be well intentioned to increase diversity in the FDNY, it could not be applied fairly. There are other ways to accomplish these goals and as we have testified in the past, the UFA would be in full support of them.