

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Thursday, May 3, 2018**  
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## **Township Association Applauds Rep. Barrar for Supporting Its Call for Special Legislative Session on Fire and EMS Issues**

The following statement was issued today by David M. Sanko, executive director of the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors, which represents the 1,454 townships of the second class across Pennsylvania. Townships, in turn, represent more residents — 5.5 million Pennsylvanians — than any other type of political subdivision in the commonwealth and cover 95 percent of the commonwealth’s land mass.

“On behalf of the PSATS Executive Board and our member townships, we applaud state Rep. Steve Barrar for supporting our association’s call for a special session of the legislature to address volunteer fire and EMS manpower shortage and funding issues.

“In recent decades, volunteers at fire companies have dropped from 300,000 strong in the 1960s and ’70s to below 50,000 today, a sobering statistic that threatens the volunteer model for providing this vital public safety service.

“If state and local governments don’t find a way to recruit and retain these very necessary volunteers, communities will be forced to pay nearly \$10 billion a year for fire service, according to figures cited by the state fire commissioner.

“At our recent annual conference in Hershey, PSATS President Shirl Barnhart of Greene County, who is serving on the SR 6 Commission studying fire and EMS issues, demanded that the governor call a special session of the legislature to act now on the volunteer fire crisis.

“We have been dealing with this crisis for far too long. It’s time that our hard-working fire companies and volunteers receive the attention and recognition they deserve from Harrisburg.

“PSATS pledges to work with Rep. Barrar and the rest of the legislature to find workable solutions that keep our volunteer fire and EMS services viable and affordable for a long time to come.”