

Good afternoon ladies and gentleman, Senator Lautenberg, Gov Corzine, and other special guests. The East Franklin Volunteer Fire Department welcomes you to the home of Franklin's bravest and the home of fallen firefighter Kevin Apuzzio. On the morning of April 11, 2006 Kevin gave his life in the line of duty to this community as he and a team of firefighters tried to rescue an elderly woman from her burning home. As you can see by the statue outside, we honor Kevin everyday. As time has gone by, we have not only tried to heal, but also have been searching for ways to improve our service, the safety of the firefighters, and the security of our families.

The state of New Jersey has over 78,000 dedicated firefighters in its ranks, which includes volunteer, career, on-call, and those employed by state or local government. Unfortunately, in the last eight years, forty of those dedicated firefighters have lost their lives in the line of duty. Thirty-eight states in this great nation have some type of death benefit for the families of fallen firefighters. Unfortunately, New Jersey is not one of those states.

Today is not about partisan politics, but about unifying to support the citizens of this great state. In support of those that sacrifice of themselves and their families, we would like to propose the following draft bill, entitled the Assistance to Fire Fighters Families Act, that we would like to see taken to Trenton for consideration during the next legislative session.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF PROPOSED BILL INSERTED HERE**

I ask all of you to please support this bill so, if another tragedy should strike within this great state, the burden carried by the family of a brave firefighter will not include that of financial stress.

Thank you for your time, enjoy your day, and please take a few minutes to visit the memorials thru out the station to learn more about Kevin's selfless dedication to the citizens of this township.