

HERALDNEWS

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Averting future fire tragedies

During the early-morning hours of Dec. 21, a fire broke out on the ninth floor of a 16-story high-rise apartment building at 85 Presidential Blvd. in Paterson ("1 dead, 5 hurt in Paterson apartment fire," Page L-3, Dec. 22). The fire took the life of one building resident and injured five people — two of them firefighters battling the blaze.

This tragedy might have been averted if the Legislature had adopted proposed regulations that would have required New Jersey's older high-rise buildings to be retrofitted and equipped with comprehensive fire sprinkler systems like those found in newer high-rise buildings. Last year, the state had a chance to adopt these proposed high-rise retrofit regulations, but chose not to do so.

The state now has a tremendous opportunity to prevent future fire tragedies. There is a pending regulation to make it mandatory that, starting in 2012, all newly constructed one- and two-family homes, condominiums and town houses be equipped with fire sprinklers.

I hope our elected officials in Trenton will take decisive action in approving these regulations.

David Kurasz

North Brunswick, Dec. 21

The writer is executive director of the New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board in North Brunswick.

