

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

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