



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Governor Cuomo Signs Legislation Allowing Medical Marijuana for PTSD

TERRENCE MURPHY November 13, 2017

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Albany, NY - For the more than 300,000 veterans nationwide diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), coming home did not necessarily mean that they left the horrors of war behind them. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, roughly 20% of veterans who served in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom suffer from PTSD. About 12% of Gulf War veterans have experienced PTSD, while 30% of Vietnam War veterans have had some form of PTSD in their lifetime. As an advocate for improving health care services for our veterans, Senator Terrence Murphy co-sponsored legislation that would ease the constant pain, depression, and occurrence of substance abuse among veterans struggling with PTSD.

In honor of Veterans Day this past Saturday, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed legislation allowing medicinal marijuana to be used to treat PTSD. The bi-partisan bill, sponsored in the Senate by Senator Diane Savino and in the Assembly by Assemblyman Dick Gottfried, allows military veterans, as well as police officers, firefighters, and survivors of domestic violence access to the state's burgeoning marijuana dispensary system. It is estimated that more than 19,000 patients with PTSD in New York could benefit from the use of medical marijuana.

"Freedom isn't free. Our veterans risked their lives to protect our freedom, but many of them paid a heavy price, coming home to fight a different foe - PTSD," said Senator Murphy. "If we can provide a treatment that can ease our veterans suffering and can improve their quality of life, then we need to make it readily available."

"New York is home to some of the bravest service members in the nation. In addition to residents suffering from PTSD due to other traumatic experiences, this legislation will ensure that everyone receives the effective treatment they deserve," Senator Savino said in a statement.

PTSD is an anxiety disorder that can occur when a person is exposed to an extraordinary life-threatening situation, such as frontline battle. A veteran with PTSD often relives the traumatic event through nightmares, intrusive memories and flashbacks, and may experience feelings of isolation, irritability, and guilt. They may also have problems sleeping and can find it difficult to concentrate.

Medical marijuana is currently legal in New York for a handful of serious ailments and conditions, including cancer, HIV and AIDS, Lou Gehrig's, Parkinson's and Huntington's diseases, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis and some spinal injuries.