



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

## Senate Passes Legislation to Limit Protests at Military Funerals

WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR. March 14, 2011

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" Specialist Thomas Wilwerth Military Dignity Act"

The New York State Senate passed legislation today (S.3901), that would limit protests at military funerals. Called " Specialist Thomas Wilwerth Military Dignity Act," the proposed law is named for an Iraq War Veteran who lost his life in combat in 2006.

The bill prohibits protests within 2,500 feet of military services, funerals, and processions of deceased service members unless the protest organizers post a bond to the local municipality to defray the increased security costs associated with demonstrations that occur closer to these funeral activities. Protesters would also not be permitted within 500 feet of funeral activities and would have to apply for a permit with the New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs under this measure.

"As a retired US Army officer, this legislation is deeply important to me," said Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson). "Ensuring our servicemen and servicewomen are afforded a dignified military funeral is the least we can do to honor their service to our country. I

thank my colleagues for their swift action on this legislation and urge the Assembly to address this topic immediately so it can be delivered to Governor Cuomo for his signature," said Larkin.

Massachusetts has a similar law that enforces a buffer zone around funerals to prevent disruptions by protesters.