



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Senate Passes Legislation to Limit Protests at Military Funerals, Additional Legislation to Support Veterans

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March 15, 2011

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

This legislation is part of a package of Veterans bills that was passed by the Senate Monday.

In addition, the Senate passed legislation that would significantly enhance the protection of property, rights and services available to current and former military personnel. The seven bills would build upon the Senate's ongoing commitment to increase support for veterans and their families.

The veterans legislative package acted upon Monday includes:

- Bill S.2421 would require that absentee or military ballots of any active duty service member be counted even if such service member dies before the date of the election for which it was cast.
- Bill S.2424A establishes the New York State Veterans Cemetery Act and provides the mechanism for the establishment of a New York State Veterans Cemetery Program;
- Bill S.3484 extends provisions establishing a recruitment incentive and retention program in the form of a tuition reimbursement for certain active members of the New York Army National Guard, Air National Guard and Naval Militia;
- Bill S.1728 would create the crime of "Cemetery Desecration of a Veteran" and also allows community service to be provided for desecrated cemeteries as a condition for probation or conditional release;

- Bill S.1504 would prohibit the unauthorized sale of veterans' commemorative property, including artifacts, statues or other physical memorabilia from a cemetery, in order to preserve history and provide for the continued reverence of those who faithfully served our country;
- Bill S.1431 directs the Adjutant General to present a United States flag to the person disposing of the body of a member of the National Guard, Air National Guard or Naval Militia who dies in the service of their state and nation; and
- Bill S.656 allows the state Department of Environmental Conservation to organize fishing events that provide physical or emotional rehabilitation for veterans or active duty members of the armed forces without the need for veterans or active duty members to obtain fishing licenses.