



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

## **Senate Celebrates New York's Service Men and Women**

Dean G. Skelos

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*Bills Create Opportunities for Honoring, Remembering and Informing Veterans*

The New York State Senate today focused on the important contributions of current and former service men and women by passing three measures to honor and remember their legacies, as well as help them stay informed of the benefits and services available to them. The Senators were joined by a contingent of visitors from the United States Military Academy for what is known as West Point Day at the Capitol.

“We are honored to host the brave and heroic leaders from West Point, whose service in these difficult times are an inspiration to all New Yorkers,” Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos said. “As we celebrate their commitment to protecting our

freedom, we must continue to celebrate and support the veterans who served before them, and uphold our responsibility to pay tribute to their sacrifices.”

West Point Day provides an opportunity for the Legislature to meet distinguished cadets and officers from the Military Academy and show appreciation for their service. The historic educational institution perched on the Hudson River is a source of tremendous pride for New Yorkers and its graduates often go on to become the nation’s top military leaders. The Senate adopted a resolution recognizing West Point’s contributions to our state and nation, and acted on three bills focused on veterans’ issues.

Bill S.2900 sponsored by Senator John DeFrancisco (R-C-I, Syracuse) creates the Campaign Medal for Service to recognize New Yorkers who defended our country and our state during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Afghanistan War, and the first and second Persian Gulf Wars. The bill has been sent to the Assembly.

Senator DeFrancisco said, “I am very honored to be able to recognize our soldiers with the Campaign Medal for Service. I commend our courageous soldiers for their patriotism, dedication and strong commitment to our nation. Answering the call to serve in this dangerous time is truly an inspiration to all of us.”

A bill (S.3957) sponsored by Senator Greg Ball (R-C, Pawling) allows New York State to participate in the national veterans’ movement, and designates the “Honor and Remember” flag for fallen members of the armed forces. Inspired by George Lutz, a Gold-Star father whose son was killed in 2005 in Fallujah, Iraq, the flag was created to serve as a visible reminder of the sacrifice of those who gave their lives in service to their country. The bill has been sent to the Assembly.

“As Chairman of Homeland Security, Veterans and Military Affairs, I am proud to celebrate West Point Day at the Capitol today along with my veterans and fellow Senators. I am honored to welcome these fine young men and women to the Senate

Chamber,” said Senator Ball. “My finest memories are from my days at the Air Force Academy and my best friendships continue from the Cadets I met there. It is our responsibility as a nation to make sure that these great young patriots continue to serve in the strongest and most impressive fighting force in the world!”

Senator Ball said, “In this year’s budget I was able to secure \$11.5 million in funding for veterans, and restore almost \$2 million to save the Montrose Veterans’ home. I fought in a pretty tough financial arena, but being able to come out with solid gains and restorations for our veterans is what matters.”

Senator Ball invites all veterans and members of the community to join him in celebrating the restoration of funds for the veterans’ home. Senator Ball is holding a press conference at 2 p.m. tomorrow, Thursday April 7, 2011, at the New York State Veterans’ Home at Montrose, located at 2090 Albany Post Road, Montrose, NY 10548.

The Senate also gave final legislative passage to bill S.205, sponsored by Senator George Maziarz (R-C, Newfane), which enhances the ability of localities to provide information to veterans about services and benefits available to them. The bill will be sent to the Governor.

**Video: Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos speaks on West Point Day**