



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

## **Senate Acts to Create New Panel to Support Aging Veterans**

Dean G. Skelos

May 16, 2011

*Measure Seeks To Improve State Consideration of Issues Facing Vets*

The New York State Senate today approved legislation to help older veterans by creating an advisory committee that specifically assists state officials in addressing important veterans issues. New York has the second highest veteran population in the United States and bill S.3337, sponsored by Senator Michael Ranzenhofer (R-C-I, Amherst), focuses on improving the care and state support available to aging veterans by creating a panel of gerontology and veterans' issue experts.

"Our veterans have sacrificed so much for our country and for the freedoms which we all enjoy," Senator Ranzenhofer said. "They have earned only the best care and support programs and establishing a Veterans Advisory Committee will ensure that continues."

“New York’s veterans have served and sacrificed for their country, and so it is our responsibility to ensure they receive the best care possible as they get older,” Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos said. “Creating an advisory committee of experts trained to identify and address issues specific to aging veterans will help ensure that our state continues to provide the necessary services that will support our veterans and their families.”

Older veterans represent a population in New York whose needs and problems pervade multiple geriatrics and gerontology disciplines. This legislation establishes a Veterans Gerontological Advisory Committee, which will advise the Director of the state Office for the Aging on policies, programs, services and trends affecting New York’s aging veteran population.

At no cost to the taxpayers, the advisory committee will be able to provide crucial recommendations aimed at improving the care and support available to aging veterans. The membership will be drawn from the ranks of New York’s finest experts on aging, seniors’ and veterans’ issues, representing medical researchers, practitioners, academia, and veterans’ organizations.

Their mission will be to share information and challenges associated with caring for aging veterans and their families. The panel would provide the Office for the Aging with guidance on pressing concerns including caregiver initiatives, alternative housing trends for veterans, long term and continuing care, health promotion and rehabilitation, departmental

research and dementia research. The committee can also play a role in educating staff and the public on a wide range of issues affecting veterans and seniors.

The bill has been sent to the Assembly.