



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

Senator Nozzolio Supports Legislation Protecting Fallen Veterans From Disrespectful Funeral Protests

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO June 20, 2011

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New York State Senator Mike Nozzolio announced that the Senate has adopted legislation he fought to enact that establishes stronger restrictions on demonstrations seeking to disrupt military funerals, burials or memorial services.

“We have no greater obligation than to honor the lives of those military heroes who have paid the ultimate price in defense of the freedoms we enjoy in this Nation,” said Senator Nozzolio. “Unfortunately, some individuals misuse those freedoms by hatefully disrupting the dignified burial of our fallen servicemen and women, adding to the unspeakable grief of their families and loved ones. This important legislation protects our gold star families from these unconscionable demonstrations and allows them to peacefully mourn the loss of their loved ones with respect and honor.”

The legislation enacted by the Senate includes a measure co-sponsored by Senator Nozzolio (S.3901) that establishes a permit process for demonstrations at veteran and veteran family member funerals, and authorizes fines for failure to comply with the permit provisions. Senator Nozzolio also supported legislation (S.5605) that triples the buffer zone distance for protests around a religious service, funeral, burial or memorial service from 100 feet to 300 feet. These measures fully comply with the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling regarding protests at military funerals, which asserts that states have a compelling interest in protecting the family and friends of deceased military personnel while they are mourning.

The legislation has been adopted in both houses of the State Legislature with bi-partisan support and only awaits Governor Cuomo’s signature to become law.

“Grieving military families shouldn’t be the target of depraved political demonstrations,” said Senator Nozzolio. “I am pleased that the State Legislature has enacted these important restrictions and protections to help families and friends honor our state’s fallen heroes.”