



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo Praises Package of Bills to Aid and Honor New York State's Veterans

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR July 15, 2013

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**Queens, NY, July 15, 2013 -- NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. (D-Queens)**, applauded the State Senate and State Assembly for passage of legislation to increase job opportunities for veterans, aid disabled veterans in the civil service system, honor servicemen and servicewomen who served during the Cold War period in our nation's history and help provide local tax relief to veterans' organizations. All bills will next be sent to the governor for review.

Addabbo, who serves as the ranking Democratic member of the Senate Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs, said, "The 2013 legislative session has been a good one in terms of addressing some of the most important needs of our state's veterans, including those who will be returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan in the months and years to come. In addition to approving a program in the 2013-2014 State Budget that will provide tax incentives for employers to hire former servicemen and servicewomen, we also passed a variety of initiatives to assist our veterans in other ways."

In order to help former servicemen and servicewomen gain access to jobs in New York State agencies, the Legislature approved the "Veterans Employment Act," co-sponsored by Addabbo (S.5504/A.7761), to encourage government entities to look to veterans when filling temporary positions. The senator noted that unemployment among New York's post-9/11 veterans was 10.7 percent in 2012 – nearly one percent higher than the national average and considerably higher than the overall New York State unemployment rate of 8.2 percent.

“Right now, many temporary jobs in state government are filled when agencies reach out to temporary employment service companies to find candidates,” Addabbo said. “Under this legislation, a ‘veteran temporary hiring list’ would be compiled and maintained by the State Department of Civil Service, giving agencies the opportunity to work with veterans whose skills and experience are a match for the available jobs.” These temporary appointments in state agencies occur when regular employees are out for vacation, maternity leave, extended sick leave or other lengthy absences from the workplace.

In another action to aid veterans in the labor force, a proposed amendment to the New York State Constitution (S.1562/A.4359) was approved for the second time, and will go before the public for consideration on this November’s election ballot. “Under this proposed amendment, veterans who become disabled in combat, after already being identified by the civil service system as veterans at their first appointment, would be able to receive disability-related points when competing for promotions or taking exams,” Addabbo said. “If approved by the voters, this will help to ensure that veterans who become disabled following their first appointment are rightfully recognized for the injuries they have suffered.”

The senator is also the author of legislation (S.4404/A.4168) that would require the State Division of Veterans Affairs to include an Internet portal on its Web site to help veterans translate their military skills and experience into civilian terms when seeking employment. The bill is awaiting consideration by the governor.

In order to recognize veterans who served honorably in various capacities during the Cold War Era running from September 2, 1945 to December 26, 1991, legislation (S.2574/A.5890) was approved to provide these servicemen and servicewomen with the opportunity to receive a New York State Cold War Certificate. “During this lengthy period in our nation’s history, many of our veterans were involved in hundreds of military operations and exercises – some covert – aimed at keeping our country safe, promoting world stability and being ever

watchful of nuclear proliferation,” said Addabbo. “Since there have been few official sources of recognition for these veterans on the federal level, it seems appropriate that we honor them on the state level.”

Another bill (S.936/A.2283) is designed to provide tax relief to veteran organizations’ posts that provide rental space in their buildings to community, charitable, educational and other groups. “While property owned by veterans’ organizations, including veteran post buildings, are exempt from property taxes, there has been some confusion about how to treat the rental space occupied by groups that may not be similarly designated as tax-exempt,” Addabbo said. “This legislation will clarify that veterans’ organizations should not be charged local property taxes on the portions of their buildings that are being rented out to other groups, regardless of their tax-exempt status.”

Addabbo said he hopes Governor Cuomo will act expeditiously to help New York’s veterans by signing all of these bills into law. “While there are many other issues of great importance to our veterans that need attention, and our work as legislators is far from over in assisting our veterans, all of these initiatives will help to improve the lives of former servicemen and servicewomen – and their families – living in the Empire State,” he said. “I look forward to continuing to work with our veterans and my legislative colleagues to accomplish even more for these courageous men and women in the future.”

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