



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Senate Passes Bill for State Contract Set-Aside for Disabled Veterans

DEAN G. SKELOS March 24, 2014

Helping our Heroes: New Initiative Helps Service Disabled Vets

Let's welcome them home
with the promise of
economic opportunity



The New York State Senate today passed legislation (S6865), sponsored by Senator Greg Ball (R, C, I – Patterson), Chairman of the Senate Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee, to facilitate the awarding of state contracts to disabled veterans.

The bill will create a six percent state contract set-aside for service-connected disabled-veteran owned small businesses. The “Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Act” will

ensure New York State's service-connected disabled veterans are better able to compete for millions of dollars in state contracts.

The set-aside is very similar to the highly successful three percent preference that the federal government offers. A three-way agreement on the bill was announced during the Governor's Veterans and Military Families Summit held last week in Albany.

"New Yorkers can stand tall and proud today knowing that we have kept America's promise to our veterans and service-disabled heroes. This landmark legislation will create tens of thousands of jobs for veterans statewide and will allow service-disabled veteran small business owners to tap into hundreds of millions of dollars in state contracting," said Senator Greg Ball. "This single act will do more to reverse the high veteran unemployment rate than anything else we have done, or will do. Yet beyond just creating jobs, this is about saving lives, and confronting the epidemic of veteran suicide through meaningful employment. We have been fighting to establish this set-aside for years and I want to sincerely thank Governor Cuomo for giving us the backing we desperately needed at a critical time. Governor Cuomo is to be applauded for keeping his commitment to our heroes."

"Let it be clear that this is not a handout, this is an opportunity for both employee and employer," Senator Ball said. "These men and women have the exact skill sets we need in the workplace and the integrity we desperately need in the board room. The same attributes that make these people so vital to defending our freedoms are the same hard-earned intangibles that make them exceptional at running their businesses and creating jobs. This is

what good people can accomplish when they forget the politics and just focus on doing the right thing. Bravo to all involved, bravo!"

State Senate Co-Leader Dean G. Skelos said, "The contributions and sacrifices made by New York's active duty military veterans and their families are an inspiration to us all. The bill demonstrates our commitment to building on our efforts to ensure that veterans receive the benefits, support and economic opportunities they deserve. I applaud Senator Ball for his efforts on this issue."

According to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, New York State is home to nearly 900,000 veterans, 600,000 of whom have served during periods of conflict. According to Governor Andrew Cuomo, there are roughly 106,000 service-connected disabled veterans in New York State.

Eugene Parrotta, Chairman of Senator Greg Ball's Veterans Advisory Council and two-time Purple Heart recipient, said: "As the director of veterans affairs for the 40th Senate District, under Senator Greg Ball, I am proud to announce that this legislation has finally been approved. It was a long time in coming, but with a forceful array of supporters on both sides it is now on its way to becoming law. It has been my experience in dealing with disabled veterans that there was a feeling of disbelief that New York State did not have this law on the books already. As the state with the most military, most wounded and the most killed in action since this country was founded, a great wrong has been righted. I would like to extend a very heartfelt thank you to Governor Cuomo and all the elected officials, especially Senator

Ball, for all the hard work.”

Service-connected disabled veterans from Drexel Hamilton, LLC, also joined the efforts in passing this legislation. Drexel Hamilton is a full-service institutional broker-dealer founded on the principle of offering meaningful employment opportunities to disabled veterans desiring a career in financial services.

James Cahill, president of Drexel Hamilton LLC, said: “New York's veteran-owned businesses will get the opportunities they deserve to compete and grow, thanks to the leadership of Governor Cuomo, Senator Ball, Assemblyman Ortiz and other leaders in Albany who championed this cause. When veteran-owned businesses thrive, it means more veterans have access to meaningful careers that allow them to demonstrate their full capabilities, and it means their families have the chance to share in the American dream. It's another reason why New York State is a great place to start a business. Drexel Hamilton thanks all of those in Albany for their work in this critical effort for New York's veterans.”

U.S. Representative Sean Patrick Maloney recently teamed up with Senator Ball to host a “NY Jobs For Heroes Roundtable” at the Carmel Town Hall to call for the legislation. “After our brave men and women have dedicated their lives in service to our country, more than three million veterans have come home to start small businesses. We must do all that we can to support our heroes, and I commend Governor Cuomo and Senator Ball for working together on this historic agreement to ensure our veteran-owned businesses have access to billions of dollars in state contracts. With post 9-11 veterans facing a staggering 9.2 percent

unemployment rate nationwide, it's our duty to help highly skilled veterans start small businesses and gain meaningful employment upon their return to civilian life," said Representative Sean Patrick Maloney.

Also participating in the "NY Jobs For Heroes" roundtable, as well as Senator Greg Ball's lobby day in Albany to push for this legislation, was former CEO of HBO and Yorktown resident, Bill Nelson, who said: "Passing the NY Jobs For Heroes legislation sends the strong message that Governor Cuomo and the NYS Senate and Assembly support our service-disabled veterans and recognize the sacrifice they and their families have made. This legislation has always been about giving the opportunity to our disabled veteran small business owners to provide for themselves, and now they can do just that. I especially commend Senator Ball and his colleagues who have fought for this legislation since 2007 and for the Governor's leadership in bringing this to fruition."

Tully Rinckey PLLC Managing Partner Greg T. Rinckey, Esq. said: "Passage of this legislation will change the game for Tully Rinckey PLLC, and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses like us across New York. Opening the door to veterans will begin to chip away at the chronically high unemployment rate for New Yorkers who served, and at the same time encourage investment in a small business community that sorely needs it. It's a win-win. I applaud Senator Ball, and the rest of the Legislature, for making New York a leader in helping veterans, as well as small businesses."

The bill was sent to the Assembly.

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