



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

## Seward Bill Part Of Senate Package To Aid NY Veterans

JAMES L. SEWARD June 2, 2014

| ISSUE: **VETERANS**

**ALBANY, 06/02/14 --** State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) today announced senate passage of a package of legislation to provide New York’s military veterans with tax relief, expanded benefits, and special honors. A bill sponsored by Senator Seward (S.3572A) that would exempt veterans organizations from paying taxes on heating fuel was part of the package.

**“Veterans groups do a great deal for their members and communities, removing a layer of bureaucracy and saving them a few dollars is the least we can do,”** said Senator Seward. **“My bill would provide veterans groups with the same exemption that is given to religious and charitable organizations.”**

Currently, religious and charitable organizations are exempt from paying tax on non-highway diesel motor fuel used for heating purposes. However, veteran’s organizations are required to pay the tax up-front and apply for a refund. Senator Seward’s bill was prompted by a request from veterans in Worcester, Otsego County.

**“For veteran organizations, which are primarily run by volunteers, this is a burdensome process and often leads to months of waiting to receive their refunds,”** Seward added.

Senator Seward also joined the senate in honoring World War II veterans by adopting a [resolution that commemorates the 70th anniversary of the D-Day invasion of Normandy.](#)

The event follows the recent New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame induction ceremony. Senator Seward's inductee, Edward F. Rossley of Bovina Center is a World War II veteran.

**“Mr. Rossley, and all of his fellow soldiers who fought during World War II have earned and deserve our deepest gratitude. I am proud to salute the brave men and women who fought for our freedoms, and to adopt this special resolution and the entire legislative package. The bills are comprehensive, and offer a small thank you for all our veterans have done for us and our way of life,”** Seward concluded.

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A brief overview of bills approved by the senate:

### **Tax Relief for Veterans**

S3931 sponsored by Senator Lee Zeldin (R-C-I, Shirley): extends the alternative veterans' property tax exemption by local option to active members of the military. Currently, only honorably discharged veterans are eligible for the exemption.

S4136A sponsored by Senator Andrew Lanza (R-I-C, Staten Island): honors disabled veterans who sacrificed their health and wellbeing for the safety of our country by authorizing local governments to provide a property tax exemption to 100-percent-disabled veterans who served in a combat theatre or combat zone of operations, or their unmarried surviving

spouses.

S6429 sponsored by Senator Pat Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma): authorizes local governments to create a property tax exemption for active duty military forces and reservists that are ordered to active duty.

S6781 sponsored by Senator David Carlucci (D, Rockland County): encourages more school districts to authorize a veterans' property tax exemption by giving school districts the authority to repeal the benefit in the event of a negative change to the district's economic circumstances. Some districts have not enacted the tax exemptions for veterans because of concerns it could not be reversed in the future if the need arose.

S1435 sponsored by Senator Michael Ranzenhofer (R-C-I, Amherst): assists active duty combat veterans by allowing municipalities to grant the additional combat veteran property tax exemption to persons who have been discharged from the service, then re-enlisted, served in combat, and are now returned and residing in New York State, but have not yet been again discharged. Soldiers who have returned to New York from combat in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, but who have not yet been discharged from service, have found that although they are eligible for the regular 15 percent veterans' exemption as a result of their earlier discharge, they are not eligible for the additional 10 percent combat exemption because they have not been discharged from their subsequent service.

S3572A sponsored by Senator James Seward (R-C-I, Oneonta): exempts certain non-profit veterans organizations from tax on non-highway diesel motor fuel used for heating purposes.

### **Expanding Veterans' Benefits**

S6821 sponsored by Senator Lee Zeldin (R-C-I, Shirley): provides a 60-day stay of suspension and revocation of licenses and registrations of military service personnel while on active duty, and would additionally reverse in absentia convictions of vehicle and traffic violations of such military service personnel while on active duty, without prejudice for refiling.

S1963 sponsored by Senator Joseph Griffo (R-C-I, Rome): allows those with military service and an honorable discharge to attend classes at the State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York (CUNY) on a tuition-free audit basis.

S1978 sponsored by Senator Joseph Robach (R-C-I, Rochester): makes college more affordable for those in military service by including active duty and honorably discharged veterans who attend college under the new GI bill within the definition of resident for in-state tuition eligibility at community colleges and state-aided four-year colleges.

S1051 sponsored by Senator George Maziarz (R-C, Newfane): changes the eligibility dates for a military service recognition scholarship to include conflicts that occurred after June 1, 1982, including Lebanon (1982), Grenada (1983), and Libya (1986).

S7617A sponsored by Senator Dean Skelos (R, Rockville Centre): allows veterans holding a federal Golden Access Passport or federal Access Pass to be able to access state recreational facilities free of charge.

S5735A sponsored by Senator Lee Zeldin (R-C-I, Shirley): requires the Division of Veteran Affairs to maintain a fact sheet on their website containing contact information for all veterans' integrated service networks located within the state and contact information for the United States veterans health administration. Hospitals will then be required to provide veteran patients with a copy of the fact sheet maintained by the division.

### **Honoring Veterans and their Families**

S6160 sponsored by Senator Kathleen Marchione (R-C, Halfmoon): authorizes the adjutant general of the State of New York to present a medal known as the "New York State Korean War Service Medal."

S6161 sponsored by Senator Kathleen Marchione (R-C, Halfmoon): authorizes the adjutant general of the State of New York to present a medal known as the “New York State Vietnam War Service Medal.”

S4198 sponsored by Senator Patty Ritchie (R-C, Heuvelton): establishes a “Bronze Star Recipient” and “Silver Star Recipient” license plate to be issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles upon proof that the applicant is a Bronze or Silver Star recipient, or the spouse of a recipient. The DMV already issues plates for Purple Heart recipients.

S970A sponsored by Senator Tom Libous (R-C-I, Binghamton): establishes a “gold star father” distinctive license plate to the father or the spouse of a father of a fallen soldier. A “gold star mother” plate has been available since 1991.

S3554 sponsored by Senator Joseph Griffo (R-C-I, Rome): upon surrendering a set of “gold star mother” license plates, this bill would allow the gold star mother to keep and retain one of the plates for commemorative purposes.

S7122 sponsored by Senator Michael Nozzolio (R-C, Fayette): creates a “New York State Veterans Remembrance” license plate that can be issued to a veteran or spouse of a veteran.

S3869 sponsored by Senator Michael Nozzolio (R-C, Fayette): provides legal protections for veterans memorials in New York State by establishing official recognition for the importance these memorials serve in honoring the sacrifices of our veterans. The bill is in response to actions taken by some municipalities and school districts that removed war memorials from their property without providing for the preservation, moving or replacement of the memorial.