



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Urges Budget Funding to Help Soldiers WITH Ptsd

PATTY RITCHIE March 12, 2015

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Senate Budget Restores Cuts to Programs that Help Returning Fort Drum Troops

State Senator Patty Ritchie is urging support for a Senate plan to restore funding for programs that are helping Fort Drum soldiers and North Country veterans who suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other combat related illnesses.

The Senate's budget plan, approved today, includes \$1.9 million to continue funding the programs, including Watertown's PFC Joseph Dwyer Peer-to-Peer Support Program for Veterans, and the River Community Wellness Program, located at Alexandria Bay's River Hospital.

“When our North Country troops and veterans return home from serving overseas, the battle is far from over,” said Senator Ritchie. “Many are faced with PTSD and other hidden wounds of war that make life a struggle. Our troops make tremendous sacrifices to protect our freedom, and this additional support is vital to helping more of these brave men and women who serve our country along the road to recovery.”

Senator Ritchie helped spearhead creation of the Dwyer program in 2012, working alongside then-State Sen. Lee Zeldin, a former Army lieutenant who served in Iraq as part of the 82nd Airborne Division, and is now a member of Congress.

PTSD is a mental health problem that occurs after a traumatic event like war, assault or disaster. Recent studies have shown that one in three returning troops are being diagnosed with serious PTSD symptoms. Less than 40 percent will seek help.

Senator Ritchie, who serves on a national Task Force on Military and Veterans Affairs, has been a leader at the State Capitol on veterans and military issues, including:

- *Sponsoring a new law to help disabled veterans find employment by requiring state agencies to seek out veteran-owned businesses for government contracts
- *Sponsoring the new “Hire-a-Vet” tax credit that rewards employers with tax credits when they employ recently returning veterans

[CLICK THIS LINK TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PFC. JOSEPH DWYER PROGRAM IN WATERTOWN.](#)