



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Senate Recognizes Contributions Of Veterans Through Measures To Honor Their Service And Make New York More Affordable

WILLIAM LARKIN June 3, 2016

The New York State Senate this week passed nine bills to provide important benefits and recognition to veterans and their families. The measures would help make it easier for certain military family members to work after locating to New York, increase veterans' eligibility for property tax savings, and provide additional credit and awards for military service, among other acknowledgements to recognize contributions of New York's veterans.

A measure ([S2947](#)) sponsored by Senator Patricia Ritchie (R-C, Heuvelton) makes it easier for military spouses to find reemployment upon moving to New York. Many occupations require a state license with state-specific conditions and processes, which can cause lengthy reemployment delays for military spouses moving between states. This legislation would allow these individuals to obtain a professional license from New York if they can provide a valid license from their home state and if they already meet New York's training requirements.

Senator Ritchie said, "This bill was a top priority for our nation's defense leaders and leaders at Fort Drum because it makes life easier for members of the military and their families by creating more and better opportunities for them to succeed in the new communities where they are assigned. Not only is the measure a major win for military families, it will also

benefit our state's economy by creating a new stream of employees for harder-to-fill jobs, as well as enhance our nation's overall security by providing an incentive for some of our most highly-trained soldiers to continue to serve our country."

Another bill ([S2209](#)), sponsored by Senator William Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson), allows qualified veterans to add veterans' credits to civil service competitive examination scores at any point prior to the expiration of the eligible list, including those examinations for appointments and promotions to the state police.

Senator Larkin said, "Under current law, a member of the armed forces who served in time of war is entitled to additional credit on a competitive civil service examination. However, an individual who is not qualified for veterans' credits at the time of the application, but becomes qualified for these credits during the life of the eligible list, cannot add these credits to their civil service examination score. This legislation seeks to correct this situation so that qualified veterans receive the credits they rightly deserve."

On Tuesday, an historic bill ([S7160](#)) sponsored by Senator Larkin was signed into law to allow all honorably discharged veterans who are members of a state retirement system to purchase service credit for up to three years of military service performed. Previously, only veterans who served during certain specified periods of war were eligible for this benefit. This unfairly excluded a substantial number of veterans, such as those who have recently served in Afghanistan. The bill has passed the Senate several times and is a fulfillment of the state's commitment to veterans.

Two bills sponsored by Senator Kathy Marchione (R-C-I, Halfmoon) would create new state medals to honor veterans for their military service. Bill [S1214A](#) creates a new Korean War Service Medal for military service abroad in the Korean War from June 25, 1950, through July 27, 1953. Bill [S1382](#) creates the Vietnam War Service Medal for military service abroad in the

Vietnam War from November 1, 1955, through April 30, 1975.

Senator Marchione said, “Without question, we owe everything to our courageous military veterans whose honorable service and heroic sacrifice has defended freedom and preserved our very way of life. My bipartisan legislation creates two new State Service Medals recognizing the brave soldiers who served our nation during the Korean and Vietnam Wars as a token of thanks, appreciation, and respect for their faithful, exemplary service. These new medals will recognize true heroes for everything they have done in service to a grateful state and nation.”

In Halfmoon Town Park in Saratoga County, Senator Marchione, the Town of Halfmoon, and the Senate are sponsoring a visit by the Vietnam Memorial Moving Wall through June 6. This half-size replica of the Washington, D.C. Vietnam Veterans Memorial has toured the country for 30 years, affording millions of Americans the opportunity to personally experience the special, powerful and moving tribute to the nation’s Vietnam War Veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice. The Memorial lists the names of the 58,286 American patriots who lost their lives during the Vietnam War.

The other bills passed this week include:

S3134B, sponsored by Senator Thomas Croci (R, Sayville), allows municipalities to offer the alternative veterans’ property tax exemption to members of the military who are currently serving on active duty. Currently, individuals who are in active military service need to wait until their service in uniform has been completed in order to receive the tax benefits extended by participating municipalities.

S4986, sponsored by Senator Jack Martins (R-C-I, Mineola), exempts Veterans’ memorial poppy flowers from the collection of New York State sales tax. The poppy flower has long

been a symbol used for honoring American soldiers who died bravely fighting for their country. In 1922, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) conducted its first poppy distribution for Veteran's Day and other recognition events and later had them assembled by disabled and needy veterans who would be paid for their work to provide them with financial assistance.

S2208, sponsored by Senator Larkin, prohibits cemeteries from the unauthorized sale of veteran commemorative cemetery markers, flag holders, monuments, statues or other physical memorabilia that are over 75 years old if the property is currently placed or located within a cemetery. This bill is particularly pertinent to Civil War era cemetery markers, statues, and monuments because of their age and the ornate style in which they were designed and constructed, which makes them valuable and leads to potential sale by cemetery operators.

S1628B, sponsored by Senator Phil Boyle (R-C-I, Suffolk County), makes veterans organizations such as the American Legion or VFW posts eligible for funding under the state and municipal facilities program. This would help the state provide much needed capital funding to the posts and support the valuable services they provide to veterans and their families.

S6705, sponsored by Senator Susan Serino (R-C-I, Hyde Park), authorizes the issuance of distinctive "Iraq War Veteran" or "War in Afghanistan Veteran" license plates as a recognition of their service and sacrifices.

The bills have been sent to the Assembly.