



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

## Mission Accomplished: Law Co-Sponsored By Senator Murphy Makes Pension Credit Available To All Veterans

TERRENCE MURPHY June 2, 2016

ALBANY, NY - The Veteran's Equality Law, a bill co-sponsored by Senator Murphy that would allow honorably discharged veterans to purchase three years of credit for their military service, has been signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo. The Governor had vetoed the bill twice before.

Senator Murphy said, "There is an old saying, 'the third time is a charm.' I am glad Governor Cuomo finally signed this bill into law, but it should not have taken this long. All veterans, no matter where or when they served, should have the opportunity to improve their financial security. Anything we can do to recognize the many sacrifices they have made to help protect our country is simply the right thing."

Previously, the buyback program had only been available to veterans who served in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War or in certain operations in the Middle East. Limiting service credit had left out veterans who had fought in recent conflicts, such as the war in Afghanistan. Now, any veteran employed by the state or local government will be eligible. Veterans with five years in the state pension system can now purchase up to three years credit for their military service.

Putnam County Sheriff Donald B. Smith, a retired U.S. Army Brigadier General said, "I thank Senator Murphy, his colleagues in the State Legislature and Governor Cuomo for enacting this amendment to the Retirement and Social Services Law. This reform by our state leaders recognizes the sacrifices made by more veterans-who put their civilian work careers on hold during their military service-and makes the buyback program more equitable. In enacting this needed reform, our state leaders are helping those who have sacrificed to keep America the great beacon of freedom, hope and justice in the world."

"I was very fortunate to have benefited from the state's veteran pension enhancement. I bought back several years of my military service which helped me build a better pension," said Neil Gross, a member of the New York State Teachers Retirement System who was wounded in combat in Vietnam. "The members of the military have answered call to serve their country. If they are a member of the retirement system, no matter where they served, if they are a veteran, they must be entitled to this same consideration. The passage of this legislation is also a reminder that all Americans, especially New Yorkers, are proud of all their veterans and grateful for their service to our great nation."