



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

## **O'Mara applauds approval of new law to support state veterans' homes: Nearly half of state veterans are 65 or older**

[Thomas F. O'Mara](#)

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**Elmira, N.Y., December 15**—State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) today said that legislation to establish the "Veterans' Home Assistance Fund" to allow New York State income tax filers to voluntarily contribute to the fund through a new income tax form check-off box has been signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

The legislation (S6577/A9315, Chapter 432) was unanimously approved by O'Mara and his Senate colleagues in late May, and by a vote of 126-9 by the Assembly in June. All contributions collected through the new fund are dedicated to the care and maintenance of New York State's five veterans' homes and will be distributed equally among them. Additionally, the state Health Department will provide an annual report to the governor and the Legislature detailing the amount of money dispersed by the fund and how the funds are being utilized by the homes.

"Our veterans deserve the care they have earned, which many elderly veterans receive through the statewide veterans' home system. However, health care costs are rising at an alarming rate which places a significant financial hardship on the elderly population, especially elderly veterans so often burdened with chronic ailments resulting from their military service," said O'Mara. "We need to provide

care for these men and women in their elder years. This new law will strengthen our efforts to address this responsibility by creating the Veterans' Home Assistance Fund through the addition of an income tax check-off box to allow New Yorkers to make voluntary contributions to this effort. It will help ensure an additional funding mechanism for our state-run veterans' homes."

According to 2014 data, nearly 50% of the state's veteran population is aged 65 or older.

New York State operates five Veterans' Homes, which are skilled nursing and rehabilitative facilities run by the state Health Department, to provide quality care to all eligible veterans and their eligible dependents. The homes are located in Oxford (serving the Central and Southern Tier regions), St. Albans (New York City region), Batavia (Western New York), Montrose (lower Hudson Valley), and Long Island.