



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Sen. Griffo joins with Senate colleagues to pass bill that will help more veterans get high school diplomas

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO April 17, 2018

| ISSUE: **HONORING VETERANS, DIPLOMA, HIGH SCHOOL**

ALBANY – State Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-Rome, announced today that the state Senate recently passed a bill that will honor veterans who put their lives on hold to serve the nation.

Sen. Griffo voted in support of the bill (S397B), which would allow the state to award a high school diploma to more veterans in recognition of the knowledge and experiences gained while in service. The legislation was sponsored by state Sen. Rob Ortt, R-North Tonawanda.

Current law only allows veterans who served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam to receive diplomas from their school of attendance if they were unable to complete their high school education. This measure expands eligibility to cover additional generations of New Yorkers by allowing anyone who has been honorably discharged from active military or naval service to be awarded with a diploma if they did not finish high school.

“Those who have served in the armed forces did so to protect our country and they deserve our full support,” Sen. Griffo said. “This legislation will provide all veterans with the opportunity to receive their high school diploma if they desire. It is one small way that we can thank them for their tremendous service.”

This measure builds upon significant legislative and budgetary commitments made by the Senate Majority to New York's veterans. The recently enacted 2018-19 State Budget, for instance, included the expansion of eligibility criteria for veterans to participate in the state's Home for Heroes program, which helps remove barriers to accessible and affordable housing for veterans with disabilities.

Funding also was restored by the state Senate for critical veteran's service programs across the state that had not been included in the Governor's Executive Budget, including:

- \$500,000 for the NYS Defenders Association Veterans Defense Program.
- \$250,000 in additional funding for the Veterans Outreach Center in Monroe County, for a total of \$500,000.
- \$450,000 for the Veteran's Mental Health Training Initiative.
- \$220,000 to expand the Veterans Defense Program to Long Island.
- \$200,000 for Legal Services of the Hudson Valley Veterans and Military Families Advocacy Project.
- \$200,000 for Warrior Salute.
- \$100,000 for the Veterans Justice Project.
- \$100,000 for the SAGE Veterans Project.
- \$50,000 for the Vietnam Veterans of America New York State Council.
- \$200,000 for Helmets-to-Hardhats.
- \$25,000 for the Veterans Miracle Center.
- \$125,000 for Veterans of Foreign Wars NYS Chapter Field Service Operations.

The bill will be sent to the state Assembly.

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