



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Young Legislation to Establish NYS Silver Rose Certificate Passes Senate

CATHARINE YOUNG May 17, 2018

| ISSUE: **VETERANS, AGENT ORANGE, NEW YORK STATE MILITARY SERVICE HONORS**

ALBANY – Veterans who have suffered from the effects of tactical herbicides such as Agent Orange would be eligible to receive a New York State Silver Rose Veterans' Service Certificate under legislation sponsored by Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – 57th District) that has passed the Senate. Senate Bill 6606 would authorize the creation of a new state military certificate to honor the sacrifices of these veterans while raising awareness of the long-suffering effects of these chemicals.

“New York State has a long history of recognizing the valiant actions of its veterans. Many of these courageous men and women have endured great risk and hardship in order to defend liberty and it is important that we never forget their sacrifices,” said Senator Young. “For many of our Vietnam era veterans, their exposure to toxic herbicides such as Agent Orange had devastating health consequences years down the road. Creating a special state recognition for these veterans is an opportunity to honor them while raising awareness of the deadly potential of these chemicals.”

Agent Orange was the most widely used "tactical use" defoliation chemical during the Vietnam War. It contains extremely toxic compounds which are classified as "Persistent Organic Pollutants", which remain for long periods in water tables where the chemical was

applied, as well as within local vegetation.

Veterans who were exposed to chemicals such as Agent Orange have increased rates of cancer, as well as several disorders of the nervous, digestive, and respiratory systems. They have higher rates of many kinds of cancer, including Hodgkin's and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, throat, prostate, lung, colon, and liver cancer, as well as Ischemic Heart Disease and acute/chronic leukemia.

The certificate would be available to any veteran who was exposed to dioxin or phenoxy herbicides while on active duty and who has received a medical diagnosis related to the exposure. The certificate, which could be presented posthumously, would be one of more than 20 military awards offered by New York State to eligible veterans.

The bill has been sent to the Assembly.