



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Skoufis

Skoufis Bills Advancing Benefits for Servicemembers and Veterans Signed into Law

SENATOR JAMES SKOUFIS November 12, 2019

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****PRESS RELEASE****

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Senator James Skoufis (D-Hudson Valley) announced that this year on Veterans Day, two of his bills that assist both veterans and active servicemembers were signed into law by the Governor.

The first bill, S.1681, extends a property tax benefit to active members of the armed forces who are severely disabled. Currently, only veterans, not active members of the armed forces, are eligible for a real property tax exemption for home modifications related to a service-related disability. As a result, there are seriously disabled members of our armed forces who are being excluded from receiving a benefit they rightfully deserve due to their decision to continue serving our country. This legislation finally ends the discrepancy.

The second bill, S.1660A, expands Operation Recognition, a program that provides high school diplomas to veterans who left school prior to graduating in order to serve. Previously, the program covered World War II, Vietnam War, and Korean War veterans. Under Skoufis' new law, it now covers all veterans from all conflicts.

Senator Skoufis said, "Each and every day, we must thank those who have protected the rights and liberties of every American. I'm proud and grateful that on Veterans Day this year, the Governor signed two of our bills that assist our neighbors who selflessly served. These new laws - providing tax relief to active, disabled members of the armed forces as well as expanding educational opportunities through the Operation Recognition program - are a demonstration of our unwavering commitment to New York's servicemembers and veterans."

Rafael Ortiz, Vice Commander of American Legion Post 353 in Cornwall and former Trustee of the Cornwall Board of Education said, "I sincerely thank Senator Skoufis for getting these bills signed into law. This exemplifies not only Senator Skoufis' commitment to helping veterans and those still in service, but this also shows his ability to truly deliver for us. Thought to Action: as service members, it's not in our nature to ask for help, so when we have a representative that listens, but most importantly takes real action, it means the world. Us in service now know that we have a voice and leadership that listens to us. We're all incredibly grateful for Senator Skoufis' work, leadership, and this incredible accomplishment."

Pete Rollins, Chapter Service Officer for Disabled Veterans said, "As an Assemblyman, and now as our Senator, James Skoufis has always been committed to helping veterans and the brave men and women who still serve. Members often quit school to join the armed forces and it means a lot to them to receive that diploma in their hands. Additionally, to extend a property tax benefit to disabled service members means that the very people serving will be able to

bring home more money for their families and will help prevent them from struggling. We thank Senator Skoufis for this work and the Governor for signing these bills into law on Veterans Day.”

Skoufis is committed to providing resources and access to services for New York’s servicemembers and veterans. Earlier this month, Skoufis hosted a legislative breakfast for veterans in the district to discuss priorities and local concerns. In the 2019-2020 state budget, Skoufis also secured \$200k for Legal Services of the Hudson Valley to support the organization’s Veterans and Military Families Advocacy Project.

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