



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jen Metzger

## Senator Metzger Calls for Expanding Veterans Peer Support Program in the State Budget

JEN METZGER February 13, 2020

| ISSUE: **PFC JOSEPH P. DWYER VETERANS PEER SUPPORT PROJECT , VET2VET**

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**Albany, NY...**At a [press conference](#) yesterday in Albany, Senator Metzger (SD-42) joined members of the Senate's Veterans, Homeland Security, and Military Affairs Committee in calling for funding in this year's state budget to expand the PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans Peer Support Project, which provides peer-to-peer support and counseling to veterans and their families.

The Dwyer Project began in 2012 as a pilot partnership between the Suffolk County United Veterans Program and the Suffolk County Veterans Service Agency and has been so successful that the program has been extended to 23 counties across the state, thanks to state funding. Orange County, a portion of which Metzger represents, is currently served by a highly-regarded Dwyer program--**Vet2Vet**--and she is advocating for funding in this year's budget to extend the program to other counties in her district.

"The Vet2Vet program, sponsored by the Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Peer Support Project, is one of New York's best programs to assist and support veterans suffering from the invisible wounds of war and can help save lives, yet it is not available to most of the veterans I represent in the Hudson Valley and Catskills," **said Senator Metzger**. "Having access to these peer-to-peer resources is particularly important in rural communities, where isolation is a greater problem and a significant contributing factor to higher suicide rates. This is why I am strongly advocating for extending this program in this year's budget. Our veterans have served our country bravely and sacrificed for us, and we owe it to them to provide them with the support and services they need to thrive."

"The urgent need for this program, and others like it, is evident in the needs of those suffering from their experiences and our first goal is to make sure they know that they have not been forgotten." **says Senator Brooks (SD-8), a Veteran and Chairman of the Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security, and Military affairs**. "This is a program that enables veterans with knowledge and understanding of issues like PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), depression, and substance abuse to meet with and counsel veterans who are suffering from one, or several, of these afflictions as a result of their service to our country."

Alongside Brooks, Senator Metzger will be working tirelessly with Senate colleagues to secure needed funding for the Dwyer Project as the budget process continues.

Tomorrow (February 14), Metzger will bring her [Veterans Resource Fair event series](#) to the Cook Taylor American Legion Post 111 in Ellenville, connecting active duty service members, veterans of any branch of the U.S. Military, and their families with information and resources tailored to their needs. Attendees can expect to receive legal, financial, housing and health related support from participating service organizations at the Ulster County event. Questions about the upcoming fair can be directed to [metzger@nysenate.gov](mailto:metzger@nysenate.gov) or the Senator's office at (845) 344-3311.