



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo: Every day is Veterans Day!

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. November 9, 2021

| ISSUE: **VETERANS, VETERANS ISSUES, VETERANS DAY, ADDABBO**

On Veterans Day, people across the country will take time to honor the brave and selfless Americans who have served in the United States Armed Forces, and to recognize the time, commitment, and sacrifices of these soldiers, sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and Merchant Mariners in protecting the cherished ideals and freedoms.

“Our appreciation for their service must be reflected in our actions: by ensuring the availability of good jobs, high-quality health care – including mental health care, educational opportunities, and housing,” said Addabbo, a member of the Senate Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee since being elected. “I’m proud of the work we’ve done in the NYS Senate to meet these obligations, but recognize there is much more work to be done to care for our veterans. I will continue to work with community partners to ensure opportunities for good jobs, education, and housing for veterans and their families, while also making it a priority to address the veteran’s suicide rate. During this COVID-19 pandemic and the added stress we face as a nation, it is even more important that our veterans are able to take advantage of all the services they’re entitled to,” Addabbo added.

Several Veterans’ programs were funded in the 2021-22 Enacted New York State Budget:

- \$5 million for the Joseph P. Dwyer Peer to Peer Counseling Program;

- \$8.7 million for the Division of Veterans' Services;
- \$500,000 for the NYS Defenders Association Veterans Defense Program;
- \$200,000 for Helmets-to-Hardhats;
- \$25,000 for NYS Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, Inc.;
- \$1 million for suicide prevention efforts for Veterans, First Responders, Law Enforcement, and Correction Officers;
- \$150,000 for SAGE Veterans' Project;
- \$250,000 Clear Path for Veterans;
- The Hire-A-Vet Tax Credit was extended for two years;

A number of bills sponsored by Senator Addabbo aimed at assisting veterans, which only passed the Senate in 2021, have been earmarked by the Senator to be reintroduced for the 2022 legislative session are:

- **S.2918** establishes a real property tax exemption for veterans who have a 100% service-connected disability;
- **S.4069** creates a voluntary contribution on the state personal income tax return for congressional chartered veterans' service organizations;
- **S.2680-A** to grant academic credit to veterans at state-operated institutions of SUNY and CUNY

Addabbo also plans on reintroducing these veterans' bills during the 2022 legislative session:

- **S.351** - Requires a 120-day warning period for certain veteran's organizations so they can rectify specific violations in lieu of the immediate imposition of a fine;

- **S.377** - Provides an exemption of sales tax on beer, wine, and soda for veterans service organizations such as American Legions and VFW posts;
- **S.1764** - Directs the Division of Veterans' Services to route "988" calls to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline;
- **S.2679** - Establishes a process for the alternative resolution of criminal proceedings involving service members and veterans who served in combat or experienced a traumatic event or were physically or mentally injured during military service where their resulting illness, injury, and/or other condition may have played a role in the commission of the criminal offense;
- **S.4202** - Requires the Empire State Development Corporation "Small Business Revolving Loan Fund" to target and market to veteran-owned enterprises and service-disabled veteran-owned enterprises;

In addition to S. 448, a bill signed into law that will expand veterans' access to state benefits through the Restoration of Honor Act, the following bills passed both the Senate and the Assembly, awaiting approval by Governor Hochul:

- **S.763** - This legislation removes the "time of war" requirement for veterans to qualify for additional credit on Civil Service exams. The bill provides extra credits to any veteran of the Armed Forces who was discharged or released under honorable circumstances.
- **S.2977** - This bill replaces the question "are you a veteran" with "have you ever served in the military" in state intake forms to ensure those who have served our country do not prematurely disqualify themselves from receiving veterans' benefits or veteran-specific care.
- **S.5543** - This bill removes the date limitation and the combat zone eligibility requirements for the Military Enhanced Recognition Incentive and Tribute (MERIT) Scholarship, which

will expand access to this scholarship as well as update the law to reflect how it is being interpreted in current practice.

- **S. 5245** - This bill provides in-state tuition continuity for spouses and dependents of active duty service members recently stationed outside of New York. This prevents family members of active duty military from losing their New York resident status if their primary home or domicile changes due to the active duty family member being stationed outside of New York.

“Defending our democracy is paramount, and the growing list of global challenges our service members face makes it even more important for us to support those who have answered the call to serve,” said Addabbo. “This Veterans Day, let us renew our commitment to our veterans and their families – both in word and in deed – as we honor and remember their service in defending the United States at home and abroad.”