

SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS ACT

During the 2014 Legislative Session, I supported a new state law called the “Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Act.” This law helps disabled veterans pursue new business ventures in New York State, by requiring that six percent of state contracts be reserved for service-connected, disabled-veteran owned businesses.

For more information, or to apply to become certified as a New York State Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business, please visit veterans.ny.gov/business.



NEW VETERANS LEGAL CLINIC

A new veterans law clinic at the Syracuse University College of Law will officially open its doors in January.

I was pleased to help make this project a reality by securing a \$250,000 state grant that will be spread out over two years. The Central New York Veterans Legal Clinic, located in Dineen Hall on Irving Avenue, will be staffed by SU law students and supervising faculty members, to provide FREE legal assistance to veterans on many issues, such as benefits claims and discharges.

SU College of Law graduates Tom Caruso and Josh Keefe were instrumental in the project.



Senator DeFrancisco is pictured with Tom Caruso L'14 at the SU College of Law.

FILING YOUR MILITARY PAPERS

Often times, veterans or their loved ones cannot locate their military discharge papers, also known as DD-214 forms, which are needed to apply for and obtain certain benefits. There is an easy way to avoid this.

Veterans, or their authorized family members, may file their military discharge papers directly with their County Clerk's office, free of charge, so images of these papers can be permanently archived. Thus, at any time, a veteran is able to obtain certified copies of these papers from their County Clerk's office - at NO cost.

Filing your military papers is a valuable way for veterans to assure that their military service is permanently recorded for future uses, in case the original papers are lost or destroyed.

RETURN THE FAVOR - A PROGRAM FOR VETERANS

“Return the FAVOR” is a merchant discount program for eligible veterans.

The program provides veterans with a special identification card for certain discounts on purchases or services at participating businesses. Any honorably discharged veteran can enroll in the program at their County Clerk's office with their military discharge papers. Once a veteran is approved for a FAVOR card, he or she will then be given a list of participating merchants. In both Cayuga and Onondaga Counties, there are more than 100 participating businesses per county.



CELL PHONES FOR SOLDIERS

I will once again be holding my *Cell Phones for Soldiers* collection drive this holiday season to help provide calling cards for soldiers serving overseas. My seventh-annual collection drive will kick off on November 24, 2014, and run through January 5, 2015.



Collection boxes will be set up at various shopping centers, libraries and schools. You may also drop off your gently-used cell phones at my district office, located in the State Office Building in Syracuse.

For more information about *Cell Phones for Soldiers*, please feel free to contact my district office at 315-428-7632.