



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

November 24, 2021

MARK C. WALCZYK
Assemblyman 116th District

□ ALBANY OFFICE
Room 940
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248
518-455-5545

□ DISTRICT OFFICE
Dulles State Office Building
317 Washington Street, Suite 210
Watertown, New York 13601
315-786-0284

□ SATELLITE OFFICE
3 Remington Avenue, Suite 1
Canton, New York 13617
315-386-2037

EMAIL:
walczyk@nyassembly.gov

Governor Kathy Hochul
New York State Capitol Building
Executive Chamber
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

As you craft your 2022-2023 Executive Budget proposal, we would like to share the need for a Veterans Home in Northern New York. As you know, Fort Drum is in the heart of Jefferson County. To ensure the best healthcare and treatment for the more than 14,000 veterans in Jefferson County alone, welcoming a Veterans Home into Northern New York is an easy decision.

According to the Jefferson County Department of Veterans Affairs, Jefferson County's population is roughly 14 percent veterans with a total of 14,327 veterans. The neighboring St. Lawrence County, veteran population is roughly 7%, translating to 8,024 individuals. The closest Veterans home is in Batavia, New York, nearly 3 hours away from the City of Watertown and 4 hours away from the City of Ogdensburg. Looking to Long Island State Veterans Home, Long Island's population is only 2% Veterans. We have a much higher percentage of Veterans in Jefferson and St. Lawrence compared to Long Island and Batavia.

The North Country has a dramatic need for the services and programs a State Veterans Home can offer. Veterans in Jefferson County only receive 75 vouchers from the state for housing. These vouchers do not cover the cost of treatment and other programs veterans need. One voucher is roughly \$9,000 annually for one veteran. A State Veterans Home would be a long-term investment with short term expenditure. Not only would Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties benefit from a State Veterans Home, but Lewis, Oswego, and other surrounding counties would greatly benefit as well.

It's our hope that you'll consider budget funding for a Veterans Home in Northern New York in your Executive proposal. Thank you in advance for your consideration on this highly important opportunity. If you have any questions or would like to see firsthand how a Veterans Home would benefit the region, please know we are only a phone call away.

Sincerely,

Mark C. Walczyk
Assemblyman
Front Yard of America

Ken Blankenbush
Assemblyman