



Annual Report 2025

New York State Senate Standing Committee on
**Veterans, Homeland Security
and Military Affairs**

Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton

Chair

Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins
President Pro Tempore
NYS Senate Majority Leader



CHAIR

VETERANS, HOMELAND SECURITY
AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE MEMBER

CIVIL SERVICE AND PENSIONS
CULTURAL AFFAIRS, TOURISM,
PARKS AND RECREATION
DISABILITIES
LABOR
WOMEN'S ISSUES

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



JESSICA SCARCELLA-SPANTON
SENATOR, 23RD DISTRICT

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December 2025

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Temporary President and Majority Leader
New York State Senate
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator Stewart-Cousins:

I am pleased to transmit the Annual Report of the Senate's Standing Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs for the 2025 Legislative Session. As Chair, I am proud to continue to lead our efforts to address important matters under my committee's jurisdiction.

During the 2025 Session, this Committee met four times in Session and reported 33 bills. I was proud to host the Korean War Veterans Day, Fort Drum Day, Veterans Hall of Fame, and VFW Breakfast and co-host a Vietnam Veterans Day once again.

I thank my colleagues who serve on the Committee for their efforts and support in the work that was done on the Committee this year, and I thank you for the continued support from the Majority Conference in the Committee's operations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jessica Scarcella-Spanton'.

Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton
23rd Senate District



2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

NEW YORK STATE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, HOMELAND SECURITY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

**Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton,
Chairperson**

Majority Members

Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.

April N.M. Baskin

Pete Harckham

James Sanders Jr.

José M. Serrano

Minority Members

Jacob C. Ashby, Ranking Member

Daniel G. Stec

Alexis Weik

Committee Staff

Brian J. Early

Alexander Carlin

COMMITTEE JURISDICTION AND OVERVIEW

The New York State Senate Standing Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs has legislative oversight responsibilities for issues concerning New York State's veterans and Homeland Security.

During the 2025 Legislative Session, 33 bills were referred to the Committee for its review. Of these bills, 33 were reported by the Committee. Twenty were passed by the Senate, and 12 passed in both houses. This work was conducted through a series of four committee meetings. A list of all bills that were reported by the Committee is provided at the end of this report.

In addition to its regular meetings, the Committee held four events. Topics of these events included the Korean War Veterans Celebration, Fort Drum Day, Veterans Hall of Fame, and the VFW Breakfast, which honored our active duty soldiers and veterans.

COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

The following key bills were acted on by the Committee in 2025:

- **S.243A**; Includes the space force as being members of the armed forces or veterans eligible for certain credits and benefits.
- **S.274B**; Increase awareness of volunteer opportunities available to veterans.
- **S.896**; Relates to the establishment of local comprehensive emergency management plans.
- **S.1009**; Authorizes a veteran's close friend or family member who is reasonably familiar with such veteran's wishes to request that such veteran be buried in a state veterans' cemetery.
- **S.1788**; Extends eligibility for real property tax exemptions to veterans who served on a submarine or on classified missions during a period of war.
- **S.1183**; Establishes a real property tax exemption for veterans with a 100 percent service-connected disability.
- **S.1188**; Requires a 120-day warning period for violations at certain veterans' organization facilities.
- **S.2067**; Establishes the veteran career assistance program within the SUNY and CUNY systems.
- **S.2068**; Provide a property tax exemption for an active service member whose military duty station is within the boundaries of New York State and has served in a combat zone anytime during the taxable year.
- **S.2069**; Establishes the position of an insurance liaison on the disaster preparedness commission.
- **S.2070**; Requires the department of veterans' services to establish and maintain a database of resources available in the state for veterans, members of the uniformed services, and their families.
- **S.2071**; Requires the department of labor create and maintain a list of available careers and job openings for veterans in the state of New York.
- **S.2073**; Requires the department of motor vehicles to compile a list of veterans who apply for a veteran driver's license.
- **S.2607**; Exempts certain veterans service organizations from taxes on the sales of beer, wine, and soda.
- **S.2623A**; ensure that state and local veterans' service agencies include disabled veterans in their employment assistance obligations.
- **S.3318**; Authorizes additional paid leave for public employees who are absent on military duty.
- **S.4358**; Relates to the veterans' tuition awards program.
- **S.4528**; Relates to free use of state parks, recreation facilities, and historic sites by veterans
- **S.4529**; Provides legal assistance for military families.
- **S.4530A**; Exempts military members based at Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, NY and Fort Wadsworth, Staten Island, NY on active duty who reside in NYC from the payment of E-ZPass tolls associated with the Verrazzano-Narrows Bridge

- **S.4675**; Provides minimum basic training related to handling emergency situations involving individuals with any physical and/or developmental disability to all firefighters.
- **S.4889**; Defines a veteran to include those who served a full career in the New York naval militia and/or New York Guard.
- **S.5207**; Provides childcare fee assistance to families of National Guard members, with subsidies.
- **S.5210**; Provides for reimbursement for certain insurance premiums for certain members of the naval militia, New York air, army national guard, and New York guard
- **S.5246**; Expands the definition of veteran to include members of the commissioned corps of the national oceanic and atmospheric administration and the commissioned corps of the public health service
- **S.5397**; Relates to certificates of honorable separation from or service in the armed forces of the United States.
- **S.5729**; Adds hazardous air quality to the state definition of a disaster and includes air quality emergency preparedness in local comprehensive emergency management plans.
- **S.5733**; Increases the amount of state reimbursement provided to local veterans' service agencies.
- **S.6005**; Establishes the Hire a Vet grant program.
- **S7850**; Relates to the issuance of a New York State Cold War Commemorative Medal.

PUBLIC HEARINGS, ROUNDTABLES AND NOMINATIONS

2025 Nominations:

Joseph W. Coe	Board of Visitors of the NYS Home for Veterans and Their Dependents at Oxford
John E. Fuller	Board of Visitors of the NYS Home for Veterans and Their Dependents at Oxford
Louise Mary Platt	Board of Visitors of the NYS Home for Veterans and Their Dependents at Oxford
Brig. Gen. Gary R. Charlton, II	Air National Guard
Brig. Gen. Sean M. Flynn	National Guard
Marlene Roll	NYS Home for Veterans and Their Dependents at Batavia
Lora A. Rowe	NYS Home for Veterans and Their Dependents at Oxford

TWO HOUSE BILLS

Bill	Sponsor	Summary	Significant Act
S00243A	Skoufis	Includes the Space Force as being members of the armed forces or veterans eligible for certain credits and benefits that are available to other active and veteran members of the armed forces.	Substituted By A291A - Chaptered 611
S00274B	Martinez	Requires the department of veterans' services to provide information on the department's website on volunteer opportunities available to veterans and to post relevant application forms that a qualified veteran can use to apply for volunteer opportunities.	Substituted By A8485 - Chaptered 666
S01183	Addabbo	Establishes a real property tax exemption for the primary residence of veterans with a 100 percent service connected disability.	Chaptered 672
S02068A	Scarcella-Spanton	Authorizes municipalities to offer a real property tax exemption for active military service members who at any time during the taxable year performed active duty in the armed forces in a combat zone; defines terms; makes related provisions.	Chaptered 677
S02623A	Scarcella-Spanton	Relates to the employment of veterans with disabilities program.	Substituted By A4751A - Chaptered 490
S03318	Scarcella-Spanton	Authorizes additional paid leave for public employees who are absent on military duty up to sixty days or fifty-two working days.	Vetoed Memorandum 112
S04358A	Bailey	Expands the veterans tuition awards program to allow the transfer of unused benefits to a spouse, survivor or child; defines terms.	Chaptered 688
S05246	Skoufis	Expands the definition of veteran to include members of the commissioned corps of the NOAA and the commissioned corps of the public health service; expands access to certain benefits to those who served in the commissioned corps of the NOAA and the commissioned corps of the public health service.	Substituted By A6264 - Chaptered 612
S05397A	Scarcella-Spanton	Relates to certificates of honorable separation from or service in the armed forces of the United States; provides that such certificates shall be forwarded to the appropriate local veterans' service agency within 60 days of receipt.	Substituted By A4649A - Vetoed Memorandum 104

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

Bill No.	Sponsor	Summary	Significant Action
S00243A	Skoufis	Includes the Space Force as being members of the armed forces or veterans eligible for certain credits and benefits that are available to other active and veteran members of the armed forces.	Substituted By A291A - Chaptered 611
S00274B	Martinez	Requires the department of veterans' services to provide information on the department's website on volunteer opportunities available to veterans and to post relevant application forms that a qualified veteran can use to apply for volunteer opportunities.	Substituted By A8485 - Chaptered 666
S00896	Martinez	Requires the inclusion of local and municipal animal shelters, a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals and veterinary services when establishing local comprehensive emergency management plans; requires that information to the public include the communication accommodation needs of persons with vision or hearing impairments and information on which temporary housing and other necessary facilities are designated as animal-friendly.	Passed the Senate
S01009	Brouk	Authorizes a veteran's close friend or family who is reasonably familiar with such veteran's wishes to request that such veteran be buried in a state veterans' cemetery.	Passed the Senate
S01183	Addabbo	Establishes a real property tax exemption for the primary residence of veterans with a 100 percent service connected disability.	Chaptered 672
S01188	Addabbo	Requires a 120-day warning period for violations at congressionally chartered veterans' organization facilities.	Passed the Senate
S01788	Hinchey	Extends eligibility for real property tax exemptions to veterans who served on a submarine or on classified missions during a period of war as documented by military service records.	Passed the Senate
S02067	Scarcella-Spanton	Establishes the veteran career assistance program within the SUNY and CUNY systems to provide veterans with assistance in resume writing and employment placement services.	Passed the Senate

Bill No.	Sponsor	Summary	Significant Action
S02068A	Scarcella-Spanton	Authorizes municipalities to offer a real property tax exemption for active military service members who at any time during the taxable year performed active duty in the armed forces in a combat zone; defines terms; makes related provisions.	Chaptered 677
S02069	Scarcella-Spanton	Establishes the position of an insurance liaison on the disaster preparedness commission to be appointed by the governor and serve as a non-voting member.	Passed the Senate
S02070	Scarcella-Spanton	Requires the department of veterans' services to establish and maintain, in consultation and collaboration with other state agencies, a searchable database on the department's website providing resources available in the state for veterans, members of the uniformed services, and their families.	Passed the Senate
S02071	Scarcella-Spanton	Requires the department of labor create and maintain a list of available careers and job openings for veterans in the state of New York and provide such list to the department of veterans' services; requires such list to be placed on the department of veterans' services website.	Passed the Senate
S02073	Scarcella-Spanton	Requires the department of motor vehicles compile a list of veterans who apply for a veteran driver's license and provide such list to the department of veterans' services to aid in outreach efforts by the department of veterans' services.	Passed the Senate
S02607	Addabbo	Exempts certain veterans service organizations from taxes on the sales of beer, wine and soda.	Reported to Senate Finance
S02623A	Scarcella-Spanton	Relates to the employment of veterans with disabilities program.	Substituted By A4751A - Chaptered 490
S03318	Scarcella-Spanton	Authorizes additional paid leave for public employees who are absent on military duty up to sixty days or fifty-two working days.	Vetoed Memorandum 112
S04358A	Bailey	Expands the veterans tuition awards program to allow the transfer of unused benefits to a spouse, survivor or child; defines terms.	Chaptered 688
S04528	Scarcella-Spanton	Provides that veterans who are NY residents may use state parks, recreation facilities and historic sites without fees.	Reported to Senate Finance

Bill No.	Sponsor	Summary	Significant Action
S04529	Scarcella-Spanton	Provides that the attorney general, in consultation with the adjutant general and the chair of the board of trustees of the New York interest on lawyer account fund, establish a military pro bono program to provide legal assistance without charge to those in active military service of the United States and those military personnel who have been deployed for active duty other than training, and their family members domiciled or stationed in the state; makes related provisions.	Senate Rules
S04530A	Scarcella-Spanton	Exempts military members based at Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn, New York and Fort Wadsworth, Staten Island, New York on active duty who reside in NYC from the payment of E-ZPass tolls associated with the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.	Reported to Senate Finance
S04675	Jackson	Empowers the office of fire prevention and control to, in coordination with the commissioner of the office for people with developmental disabilities and the chief disability officer, provide minimum basic training related to handling emergency situations involving individuals with any physical and/or developmental disability to all firefighters.	Reported to Senate Finance
S04889	Scarcella-Spanton	Relates to defining veteran; includes national guard members who have served for at least twenty years, part of which was during any war or period of hostilities.	Passed the Senate
S05036	Sepúlveda	Requires facilities offering dialysis services to have an alternate generated power source for use during a general power outage or disaster emergency; provides exemptions.	Senate Rules
S05207	Scarcella-Spanton	Establishes a childcare program to provide active duty members of the New York national guard assistance in locating, selecting, and offsetting the cost of civilian childcare when on-base childcare is not available to such members.	Reported to Senate Finance
S05210A	Scarcella-Spanton	Provides for reimbursement for certain insurance premiums for certain members of the naval militia, New York air, army national guard, and New York guard.	Reported to Senate Finance
S05246	Skoufis	Expands the definition of veteran to include members of the commissioned corps of the NOAA and the commissioned corps of the public health service; expands access to certain benefits to those who served in the commissioned corps of the NOAA and the commissioned corps of the public health service.	Substituted By A6264 - Chaptered 612

Bill No.	Sponsor	Summary	Significant Action
S05397A	Scarcella-Spanton	Relates to certificates of honorable separation from or service in the armed forces of the United States; provides that such certificates shall be forwarded to the appropriate local veterans' service agency within 60 days of receipt.	Substituted By A4649A - Vetoed Memorandum 104
S05729	Harckham	Adds hazardous air quality to the state definition of a disaster; requires explicit inclusion of air quality emergency preparedness in local comprehensive emergency management plans with an action plan and annual inventory of air quality emergency resources.	Passed the Senate
S05733	Scarcella-Spanton	Relates to the cost of maintenance and operation of veterans' service agencies.	Reported to Senate Finance
S05946	Sepúlveda	Enacts the "Technical Sergeant Joseph G. Lemm tuition benefit act" to allow members of the New York state organized militia to receive tuition benefits for certain post-secondary degree programs.	Reported to Senate Finance
S06005	Baskin	Establishes the hire a vet grant program; provides grants to municipalities where a veteran is hired and employed, for not less than twelve continuous and uninterrupted months in a full-time or part-time position.	Reported to Senate Finance
S07765	Scarcella-Spanton	Establishes a New York state veterans' and service member law book of a compilation of all state statutes governing the rights, privileges, benefits and services afforded to veterans, service members and their families.	Reported to Senate Finance
S07850	Scarcella-Spanton	Authorizes the presentation of a New York State Cold War Commemorative Medal for active duty during the period of September 2, 1945 through December 26, 1991.	Reported to Senate Finance

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