



NEW YORK STATE SENATE DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

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Senate Democratic Majority Celebrates ‘Veterans Hall Of Fame’ Day And Passes Veteran Support Legislation

(Albany, NY) The Senate Democratic Majority will today celebrate Veterans Hall Of Fame Day in the Senate Chamber and will pass a legislative package to provide additional benefits, protections, and services to New York veterans. The legislation advanced by the Senate Majority will protect veterans’ pensions, create a veterans’ service organization fund, and ease access to veterans’ service applications. This legislative package is a part of the Senate Majority’s commitment to provide for the brave women and men who have served in the armed forces.

“New York is home to over 800,000 veterans and we have a responsibility to provide them with the services and support they have earned,” **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said. “Easing veterans’ transition back to civilian life is a top priority for the new Senate Democratic Majority, and the bills passed today will advance that mission. I applaud Senator Brooks, Chair of Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs Committee, and all the bill sponsors for their steadfast support of our veterans and military families.”

The legislation being advanced by the Senate Majority includes:

- **Campus Services Survey:** This bill, [S.2469](#), sponsored by Senator James Sanders Jr., requires the State University of New York and the City University of New York to examine and conduct a study on the availability of campus services, programs, and resources for veteran students.
- **Veterans Service Organizations Fund:** This bill, [S.2740-A](#), sponsored by Senator Addabbo, creates a voluntary contribution on the state personal income tax return for congressional chartered veterans service organizations.
- **Mobile APP for Veterans’ Services:** This bill, [S.4477-A](#), sponsored by Senator Kaplan, requires the New York State Division of Veterans’ Services to post on its website information related to the Division’s veterans’ services mobile application that is available for download.
- **Protects Veterans’ Pensions:** This bill, [S.4807](#), sponsored by Senator Carlucci, prohibits any entity from receiving compensation for helping veterans and their dependents prepare a claim, except as permitted under the United States Department of Veterans Affairs’ standards. It would also prohibit charging unreasonable fees for services and it would ban pledging that an individual will receive a specific amount of veterans’ benefits money.

The bills passed by the Senate Majority build on previously [passed legislation](#) this session to support veterans and military families by expanding benefits and easing transition back to civilian life. Additionally, the Senate Majority [passed legislation](#) to help veterans by better publicizing veterans’ service agencies and programs and highlighting state agency positions specifically designed to be filled by disabled veterans.

Chair of the Veterans, Homeland Security, and Military Affairs Senator John E. Brooks said, “As we celebrate this Memorial Day Weekend, it is important to remember the great debt we owe to these soldiers who

have served, fought, and died for our freedom. Being a veteran myself and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security, and Military Affairs, I consider it a great privilege and a sacred responsibility to ensure the honor we bestow upon these men and women is equal to the sacrifice and service they have chosen to undertake in defense of our country.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Joseph Addabbo, Jr. said, “I am proud to sponsor bill S.2740, which would create the Veterans Service Organizations Fund, while giving residents the ability to make financial donations to any number of congressional chartered veterans’ service organizations, and have that charitable donation reflected on their personal income taxes. It is an unfortunate fact that veterans face a tough time accessing the services they are entitled to. This Veterans Service Organizations Fund would allow veterans easier access to those services by creating additional support for our veterans.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator David Carlucci said, “Veterans are heroes who have served our country selflessly to defend our freedoms. Now it’s our turn to help protect them from scam artists who seek to steal their hard earned money. My legislation will crackdown on pension poaching and help ensure senior and disabled veterans do not fall victim to predators trying to profit off their service.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Anna M. Kaplan said, “Our nation and our state owe a significant debt of gratitude to the men and women who courageously defend our freedoms in the armed forces. That’s why I’m proud to sponsor legislation that makes their lives a little bit easier, and helps them to navigate the services to which they are entitled.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator James Sanders Jr. said, “As a Marine Corps veteran, I am especially proud to have introduced a bill (S.2469), which would have CUNY and SUNY study how to increase the availability of its existing campus services, programs, and resources for veterans attending its schools. Those who have served in our country’s military have made sacrifices to protect the freedoms, we often take for granted. The least we can do is make it easier for them to continue their education, because when they accomplish their goals and achieve their dreams, everyone benefits.”

Senator Jamaal Bailey said, “Our veterans risked their lives in order to protect us and our values. It is unfortunate that many find themselves suffering from a variety of mental and physical illnesses due to their service, or struggle to find employment and housing. In New York State, we are working towards remedying these issues. I want to thank my colleagues for sponsoring vital pieces of legislation that would provide additional resources and services to those who have served our country.”

Senator Alessandra Biaggi said, “I have deep gratitude for veteran New Yorkers' dedicated service to this country and the American people. In turn it is our duty to provide wider access to the necessary resources for re-entry, create stronger protections against pension theft, and continue to support the veteran community through social and economic development resources.”

Senator Leroy Comrie said, “Hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers wore the uniform of our nation and sacrificed their comfort and security in defense of our freedom. Having the privilege of seeing firsthand how so many vets continue to serve in communities across our state, I am proud to join with my colleagues in support of this package of legislation aimed at enhancing and expanding available resources and services for those who have served in the Armed Forces.”

Senator Pete Harckham said, “Our veterans, who have sacrificed so much for our nation during both peace time and war, deserve strong financial protections, as well as the best employment and educational opportunities. I’m proud we passed bills today that do just that for our local heroes.”

Senator Tim Kennedy said, “Veterans across New York and the United States have courageously and selflessly sacrificed so much in order to protect our freedoms, and we need to make certain that we're doing

everything we can to protect them in return. By passing these reforms, we're not only connecting veterans with critical resources, but providing opportunities for long-term employment and investment.”

Senator Shelley B. Mayer said, “I am glad to stand with my colleagues and vote for legislation to improve and enhance veterans’ services and opportunities in Westchester and across New York State. These bills demonstrate our commitment to ensuring those who have served our country have the supports they need throughout their lives. Whether veterans need resources in our public universities or protections from unscrupulous financial planners, I am proud to be a part of the Senate Democratic Conference which is prioritizing legislation to assist and protect veterans across New York.”

Senator Julia Salazar said, “Veterans deserve all the care and attention our society can provide to them. War is one of the most horrible things a human being can experience, and anyone who experiences that horror deserves support and understanding at home. This package of legislation moves toward creating justice and equity to veterans, many of whom suffer disproportionately from mental illness, homelessness, and trauma disorders. While it's important to pursue peaceful solutions to our problems, caring for the veterans of war is non-negotiable and should be a bedrock social value.”

Senator Luis Sepúlveda said, “It is unconscionable that the men and women who have fought for our country are scraping away for housing, resources, employment, and programs. Individuals who have given their lives for our democracy are treated unjustly; this set of legislation will aim to help our veterans with academic opportunities, creating a voluntary contribution fund for veteran service organizations, and protecting veterans' pensions. It is essential that we fight for our veteran's rights just as they did for us.”

Senator James Skoufis said, “Developing services and protecting pensions for our veterans is of the utmost importance. Individuals who have put their life on hold to serve and protect us should come home to find support and opportunity. I stand with my colleagues in proudly passing these bills that provide vital resources for veterans.”

Senator Kevin Thomas said, “In New York, we are committed to providing for our veterans and families who have sacrificed to preserve our freedom. Too often, veterans are deprived of the services they rightly deserve. This legislation provides a range of improvements that will assist and protect veterans who are seeking the services, programs, and resources they need. I am proud of my colleagues in the State Legislature for working to reduce inequities in veterans’ access.”

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