



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## New York State Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt, Assemblyman Angelo Morinello Urge Governor Hochul to Sign Bill Expanding Veterans Tuition Assistance Program

ROBERT G. ORTT September 6, 2024

| ISSUE: **VETERANS TUITION AWARD PROGRAM, HIGHER EDUCATION, VETERANS SUPPORT**



Sen. Rob Ortt (R,C – North Tonawanda) (center) and Assemblyman Angelo Morinello (Right) Call for Gov. Hochul to sign S8596-A at a press conference Thursday at SUNY Niagara

**Niagara County, NY** - Today, New York State Senate Minority Leader Rob Ortt hosted a press conference at SUNY Niagara to discuss the benefits of New York State [Senate Bill S8596-A](#) – An act to amend the education law, in relation to expanding eligibility under the veterans

tuition awards program.

Currently, New York is home to more than 800,000 military veterans and their families. The Veterans Tuition Assistance Program is set up so that only veterans who served in combat roles may receive this benefit, leaving countless veterans ineligible.

“Attending higher education following military service is one of the many ways our veterans can more easily re-integrate into society,” said Senator Ortt. “The Veterans Tuition Assistance Program has provided many veterans with cost savings on their education to enhance their post-military career opportunities in New York State. Every veteran has served a crucial role in our military and it’s time we open this program to all veterans who reside in New York, and I call on our Governor to sign this bill into law.”

“The state of New York is home to-nearly 800,000 military veterans, all of whom are deserving of an opportunity to achieve a high-quality higher education in our state,” said Assemblyman Angelo Morinello. “Currently, the veteran’s tuition awards program is limited only to those veterans who served in active combat roles, therefore, alienating countless servicemen and women from accessing this vital program. This act aims to correct this eligibility disparity and to further deliver much needed access for New York’s veterans to fulfill their educational ambitions.”

“At SUNY Niagara, we value the contributions of veterans and active military members in the classroom,” said Lloyd A. Holmes, Ph.D., President of SUNY Niagara. “The current veteran’s tuition awards program is limited to veterans who served in active combat roles, leaving many service members unable to benefit from this important program. This legislation will address this eligibility gap and provide greater access for New York’s veterans to pursue their educational aspirations. SUNY Niagara is committed to supporting veterans and active military members by providing access to high-quality courses and programs and

we welcome them to our campus.”

The bill passed both legislative chambers with unanimous, bi-partisan support and now awaits Governor Kathy Hochul’s signature.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2023-S8596A**

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- Introduced
  
- ◦ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Delivered to Governor
  
- Signed By Governor
  
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[Expands eligibility under the veterans tuition awards program](#)

February 20, 2024

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Jessica Scarcella-Spanton**

Do you support this bill?