



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Larkin Bills Expand Benefits For Veterans

WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR. June 5, 2005

Senator Bill Larkin (R-C, Cornwall-on-Hudson) and members of the Senate Majority Conference today proposed a sweeping package of bills to honor the courage, sacrifice and achievements of servicemen and women from across the state. Also proposed was the creation of a New York State Veterans Hall of Fame.

The initiative is the centerpiece of the New York Armed Services Recognition and Support Plan and includes combat life insurance for all New Yorkers serving in war zones, expanding opportunities for higher education, and lower property taxes.

Senator Larkin, a retired U.S. Army Lt. Colonel who is also spearheading efforts to construct a national Purple Heart Hall of Honor at General George Washington's Headquarters in New Windsor, said, "Every veteran is a hero and every veteran deserves to be honored and respected for their service to our country. Today, we take another step forward to provide well earned recognition for the heroic contributions of all our veterans."

Included in the plan:

SUPPORT FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

Life Insurance for Troops Killed in War on Terror -- Provides \$400,000 in payments to all military personnel from New York who are killed in operations stemming from the War

on Terror, and includes payments for life insurance premiums for New York military personnel in combat service (S.2947-A, sponsored by Senator William J. Larkin Jr.).

The New York Military Family Relief Fund -- Creates a new check-off on state income tax returns where New Yorkers can donate money for relief grants to families of service men and women, up to \$5000 when a soldier is killed in action (S.444, sponsored by Senator Larkin).

Patriot Plan III --

Governor's Program Bill that provides health insurance and death benefits to survivors of public employees who died while on active duty, funds life insurance policies for members of the New York National Guard, and creates new "War on Terror" license plates (S.5436).

Marriage License Extension -- Extends the expiration of marriage licenses to 180 days for Active-duty military personnel to solemnize a marriage (S.5065).

EXPANDED EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

High School Diplomas For Vietnam Vets -- Expands "Operation Recognition," the popular program that authorizes high school diplomas for students called to duty, to include veterans of the Vietnam War (S.2714-A).

TAX CUTS AND FEE REDUCTIONS

School Tax Exemption For Disabled Vets -- Authorizes school districts to provide school property tax exemptions for severely disabled veterans (S.101).

Increased Veteran' Real Property Tax Exemption

-- Adjusts the value of the Veteran's Real Property Tax Exemption to account for inflation (S.4358).

Provide property tax exemptions to veterans of the "War on Terrorism"

-- Allows veterans of the War on Terrorism, including those who served in Afghanistan and

Iraq, to be eligible for the veterans' real property tax exemption (S.2224).

Free Fishing -- Allows veterans to fish for free inside any New York State Park (S.5260).

BESTOWING PUBLIC RECOGNITION

The New York Veterans Hall of Fame -- The service and sacrifice of outstanding veterans from New York will be forever recognized through the creation of the New York Veterans' Hall of Fame (S. 431).

"Persian Gulf War" License Plates -- Authorizes creation of distinctive license plates for veterans who served in the Persian Gulf War or the spouse of any such veteran (S.677).

"Bronze and Silver Star" License Plates - Authorizes creation of distinctive license plates for recipients of the Bronze Star or Silver Star (S.3565).

Patriotic Flag Sales Tax Exemption -- Exempts military service flags, prisoner of war flags, and blue star banners from sales tax. Currently only the U.S. and New York State flags are exempt. (S.2620).

Senator Larkin also announced the creation of a special new website-- **nyvets.org** -- where New Yorkers can register their support for the creation of a Veterans' Hall of Fame.