



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Young: Laud Veterans WITH "Hall of Fame"

CATHARINE YOUNG May 27, 2005

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Senator Cathy Young and members of the Senate Republican Conference today proposed creating a New York State Veterans' Hall of Fame to honor the courage, sacrifice and achievements of service men and women from across the state.

The initiative is the centerpiece of the New York Armed Services Recognition and Support Plan, a sweeping set of bills that expands benefits -- including providing combat life insurance for all New Yorkers serving in war zones, expanding opportunities for higher education, and lower property taxes -- in honor of their service.

The Hall, only the fourth in the nation, would honor legendary military leaders and everyday soldiers whose deeds and accomplishments both in combat and in civilian life merit special commendation. Included in that group are the 663 New Yorkers -- more than one-fifth of the total -- who earned the Congressional Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military award.

Senator Young announced creation of a special new website -- nyvets.org -- where New

Yorkers can register their support for the proposal. Constituents can link to the website from Senator Young's Senate website.

The Hall of Fame proposal is one of 15 bills included in the package, which builds on earlier legislative efforts, including the innovative "Patriot Plan," which provides benefits to service men and women fighting the War on Terror. The new plan expands those benefits and includes new provisions for veterans of earlier conflicts. Other provisions include:

SUPPORT FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

The New York National Guard Homefront Relief Act -- Provides \$250,000 in life insurance coverage for members of the New York National Guard called to duty in a war zone, with premiums funded by the state (S.952-A, sponsored by Senator Carl L. Marcellino).

Life Insurance for Troops Killed in War on Terror - Provides \$250,000 payments to all New Yorkers killed in operations stemming from the War on Terror, and includes payments for life insurance premiums for any New York military personnel in combat service not covered by S.952-A (S.2947, sponsored by Senator William 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, sponsored by Senator Marcellino).

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

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

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, sponsored by Senator Balboni).

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, sponsored by Senator Serphin R. Maltese, R-C, Queens).

Increased Veteran' Real Property Tax Exemption -- Adjusts the value of the Veteran's Real Property Tax Exemption to account for inflation (S.4358, sponsored by Senator Michael F. Nozzolio, R-C, Fayette). More

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, sponsored by Senator Charles J. Fuschillo Jr., R-C, Merrick).

Free Fishing -- Allows veterans to fish for free inside any New York State Park (S.5260, sponsored by Senator Dale M. Volker, R-C-I, Depew).

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, sponsored by Sen. Trunzo).

Rensselaer County Veterans' Memorial Highway -- Designates a portion of Interstate 90 in Rensselaer County as "Rensselaer County Veterans' Memorial Highway" (S.4710, sponsored by Senator Bruno).

"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, sponsored by Senator Marcellino).

"Bronze and Silver Star" License Plates - Authorizes creation of distinctive license plates for recipients of the Bronze Star or Silver Star (S.3565, sponsored by Senator Hugh Farley, R-C, Schenectady).

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, sponsored by Senator Kenneth LaValle, R-C-I, Port Jefferson).