



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Bill Limiting Protests at Military Funerals Signed Into Law

JACK M. MARTINS October 20, 2011

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A bill sponsored by Senator Lee M. Zeldin and co-sponsored by Senator Jack M. Martins limiting protests at military funerals has been signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo. The new law requires that those who protest within 1,000 feet of a military funeral must apply for a permit. The issuing authority can then impose conditions of the permit.

The United States Supreme Court, in a decision earlier this year, held that people who protest at funerals of military personnel have constitution rights. “The Supreme Court let us

down. While we have freedom of speech, it shouldn't infringe on a family's and a community's right to mourn with dignity our heroes who have sacrificed their lives for our country," Senator Martins said.

The new law requires the development and implementation of a permit process for demonstrations at veteran and veteran family member funerals, and authorizes the imposition of fines for failure to comply with the permit provisions.

Another bill that was signed into law triples the buffer zone distance for protests around a religious service, funeral, burial or memorial service from 100 feet to 300 feet.

The permit bill goes into law in November and the buffer zone legislation takes effect next March.