



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo Meets WITH New York American Legion Members, Pledges Continued Support for Needs and Concerns of Veterans

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR March 26, 2012

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**Queens, NY March 26, 2012** -- NY State Senator **Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.** (D-Queens), the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security & Military Affairs, recently joined American Legion veterans at a meeting in Albany to review and show support for the group's 2012 State Legislative Program.

Addressing the American Legion members, Addabbo underscored the tremendous debt that all Americans owe to veterans in recognition of their sacrifices and unparalleled dedication to their country. "It is an honor to advocate in the Senate on behalf of all of our veterans, whether they served in overseas conflicts long ago, or are fighting on foreign soil to protect us from the ravages of terrorism as we speak," said Addabbo. "Groups like the American Legion serve an incredibly important role for our veterans – giving them a voice, a presence, camaraderie, and a vital network of social and support services."

Addabbo also highlighted the recent concern about city agencies issuing monetary fines for violations to local American Legion and other veteran posts. The senator has introduced legislation that would eliminate the financial penalties against the veteran sites and allow them 120 days to resolve the violations. "Veterans have already paid their debt to the city and nation. They should be treated with respect, and differently, from other establishments," Addabbo stated.

The American Legion Department of New York 2012 Legislative Program advocates passage of a variety of bills addressing such issues as military service credit, protection of war memorials, tax reductions for veterans and veteran organizations, health and chemical dependency services for servicemen and servicewomen, and greater recognition of the importance and meaning of the American flag and Pledge of Allegiance. Addabbo is the sponsor of legislation (S.1719-A) that would authorize the State Department of Education to develop and make available to New York schools a curriculum focusing on the history of the American flag, and underscoring the connection between the Pledge of Allegiance and the many contributions made by United States veterans to this country.

In addition to presenting their 2012 New York State legislative priorities, the American Legion members also highlighted several new laws of importance to them approved during the 2011 legislative session. Among these was a law (Chapter 527 of the Laws of 2011) authorizing “buffer zones” around funerals and other memorial ceremonies for deceased veterans that might attract demonstrators opposed to military policies and practices. A permit process was also created in the law to allow for peaceful protests while respecting the feelings of mourners.

Addabbo, a co-sponsor of the law, adds, “While our First Amendment rights guaranteeing freedom of speech are precious, so are the rights of families who have lost loved ones in service to their country and who should be able to mourn their losses in peace and dignity. This law strikes a balance between the constitutional rights of protesters and our obligation to show respect for families who are saying a final good-bye to their beloved servicemen and servicewomen.”

In the remaining months of the 2012 Senate session, Addabbo pledged to continue working on the Senate Veterans Committee to address the many different needs and concerns of veterans and active duty military personnel in New York State.

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