



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lee M. Zeldin

Zeldin Fights for Veterans Program in State Budget

LEE M. ZELDIN March 11, 2013

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PFC JOSEPH DWYER PROGRAM

Pushes For PFC Joseph Dwyer PTSD Peer Counseling

In an effort to build on the achievements of the PFC Joseph Dwyer PTSD Peer-to-Peer Veterans Counseling Program, Senator Lee M. Zeldin (R-C-I, Shirley) successfully pushed for language in the State Senate's Budget Resolution revealed today that begins the process to continue and potentially expand this meaningful program.

At Senator Zeldin's request, the Dwyer program became a first-time Senate initiative included in the 2012-13 State Budget that has seen rapid success. Over the past year,

innovative direct counseling programs have been established for veterans in four test counties: Suffolk, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Jefferson. Recognizing PTSD statistics on returning Iraq and Afghan war veterans, Zeldin says the need for expansion of these services to more regions of the state is clear. He has proposed establishing the Dwyer program in six other counties, including Nassau County.

In addition, nine other state senators have joined Senator Zeldin in this effort and have signed a joint letter authored by Senator Zeldin to Senate leadership in support of this funding. "I am very pleased to have the bipartisan support of my colleagues, Senators David Carlucci, Greg Ball, Bill Larkin, Kathy Marchione, Patty Ritchie, John DeFrancisco, Mike Ranzenhofer, Mark Grisanti and Patrick Gallivan as we push for the Dwyer program," said Senator Zeldin.

"The counseling is free of charge and provided to veterans from other veterans who personally understand what it's like to cope with and overcome the psychological trauma experienced during intense armed conflict," added Senator Zeldin, a Major in the U.S. Army Reserves. "The veterans offering the counseling are trained and guided by professional therapists and facilitators and are truly helping their fellow veterans make the necessary adjustments back into day-to-day life here in the U.S."

Senator Zeldin concluded, "Being able to get language into the State Senate's Budget Resolution that acknowledges the Dwyer program is an important step in the process of feasibly securing funding again when we begin budget negotiations and deliberations. I am extremely hopeful that when the State Budget is finalized in less than a couple of weeks, the Legislature and Governor will approve the funding to maintain and expand this very worthy program."