



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Addabbo Meets WITH New York American Legion Members and VFW Representatives in State Capitol

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR March 18, 2013

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*Pledges Continued Support for Needs and Concerns of New York's Veterans***sueens, NY, March 18, 2013 -- NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.** (D-Queens), the ranking Democratic member of the Senate Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security & Military Affairs, recently joined New York representatives of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the American Legion at meetings in Albany to review and show support for the legislative programs being advocated by the two venerable veterans' organizations.

In meeting with the groups, 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 and VFW serve an incredibly important role for our veterans – giving them a voice, a presence, camaraderie and a vital network of social and support services."

Veterans from the VFW and American Legion voiced support for 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, veterans' legal courts that are more aware of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other psychological issues affecting veterans, and greater recognition of the importance and meaning of the American flag and Pledge of Allegiance. Veterans meeting with Senator Addabbo also discussed the overriding issues of homelessness among veterans, unemployment among former servicemen and servicewomen, and the need to help small businesses owned by veterans better compete in New York's economic arena.

"All of these diverse issues are very important to our state's veterans and I am continuing to advocate for legislation to address their most critical concerns," said Addabbo. For example, the Senator is sponsoring or co-sponsoring legislation that would: expand real property tax exemptions for disabled veterans (S.3410) and veterans' organizations (S.3404); provide incentives for businesses to hire unemployed veterans (S.3745); provide veterans' organizations with assistance in correcting code violations in their facilities (S.2962); and help service-disabled veterans who own small businesses compete for state contracts (S.2803). Addabbo also sponsors several bills allowing veterans to buy back pension credit for the time they were deployed in military service, as well as a bill (S.1929) that would authorize the State Department of Education to develop a curriculum focusing on the history of the American flag, Pledge of Allegiance and the many contributions made by United States veterans.

As the leading Democratic member of the Senate Veterans Committee, Addabbo noted that he also recently wrote to the Senate leadership, along with a number of his colleagues, to urge that action be taken in the 2013-2014 State Budget to help establish a New York State Veterans' Cemetery and to coordinate with the federal government to accomplish this goal. "We should join 38 other states that have created final resting places to honor those who served," he said.

In addition, Addabbo recently joined in writing to the federal Department of Defense to ensure that the new Distinguished Warfare Medal – which will be awarded to unmanned aircraft operators and soldiers who use technology to wage war far away from the battlefield – does not supersede the military honors provided to those who served in

direct physical combat, including the Purple Heart and Bronze Star-with-Valor-device medals. "I deeply appreciate the role that technology plays in modern warfare and all military personnel, but I don't want to see the importance of other high military honors awarded for bravery, or risk of personal injury or death on the battlefield diminished in any way," he said.

In the remaining months of the 2013 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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