



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins Says 'No' to Driver's License Fee for Our Nation's Heroes

JACK M. MARTINS October 16, 2013

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Sponsors bill to eliminate DMV fee for Veteran Distinction on NYS Driver's Licenses

Calling a Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) fee for a “Veteran” distinction on a driver’s license unfair to military service men and women who served our country bravely, Senator Jack M. Martins is sponsoring a bill to eliminate the fee imposed on veterans.

In 2012, the New York legislature passed a measure allowing qualified U.S. military veterans to obtain a New York State driver license with a special veteran designation, thereby

eliminating the need for veterans to carry separate documentation proving their military service. That law recently went into effect and now allows any veteran who was honorably discharged to have the word "Veteran" printed on the upper left hand corner of his or her New York State driver's license, learning permit or non-driver photo I.D. card.

Since many local businesses across the state provide discounts to veterans, the new law provides convenience for veterans, since it eliminates the need to carry additional proof of service for some of the benefits provided by local businesses.

However, those who wish to trade in their current license for one with the "Veteran" distinction prior to their license renewal are required to pay DMV fee. Senator Martins is pushing back, introducing a bill that eliminates the fee for honorably discharged service men and women so that veterans can swap their current driver's license for one which recognizes their military service at any time, for free.

"Those men and women who have served in our armed forces, protecting our nation's freedom, have earned that veteran's distinction." Senator Martins said. "To charge those who have answered our nation's call a fee to have their service recognized on their driver's license is wrong. When our brave service men and women return from duty, they've earned the right to be called a veteran – they shouldn't have to pay any fee to have that distinction appear on their license."

Andrew Booth, co-chair of the Nassau County American Legion's Legislative Committee, who has already gotten the distinction put on his license, fully supports the bill. "Why should we pay \$12.50? I know the economy is bad, but the money shouldn't be taken from the veterans," he said.

“It certainly would be appreciated by the members of our post,” said senior vice-commander Jack Hirsch of the Albertson VFW Post #5253. “On behalf of our post and commander Gaetano (Tom) Rumore, the efforts of Jack Martins have been welcome. This bill would be a great thing.”

“I would fully support that bill. Our veterans have already done so much for our country. It would be an appropriate gesture from the state to recognize that bill,” said Manny Rodriguez, past commander of the Elmont American Legion Post #1033, who is currently serving in active duty in Fort Hood awaiting deployment to Kuwait.