



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

## Senator Martins Announces New Law to Help Homeless Veterans

JACK M. MARTINS November 9, 2014

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Senator Jack M. Martins (R-Mineola) announced that legislation he sponsored creating a Homeless Veterans Assistance Fund to support military servicemen and women who need help with housing has been signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo. The law allows New Yorkers to contribute to the fund when filing their personal income taxes.

“Veterans risk their lives during their military service to protect us; their lives should not be at risk back home because they can’t access needed care and services. We must always remember, honor, and respect these brave men and women, and most importantly, support them in their time of need. This law will help do just that, and I thank Governor Cuomo for working together with us to protect our American heroes,” said Senator Martins.

The law creates the Homeless Veterans Assistance Fund to assist and care for homeless veterans with housing and housing-related expenses, as determined by the New York State Department of Veterans Affairs. To facilitate contributions, the fund will have a place on the state’s personal income tax return. New Yorkers electing to support the fund can make contributions in any dollar amount.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs estimated that there were over 57,000 homeless veterans on a single night in January 2013 in the United States. The V.A. lists a number of

factors leading to veterans becoming homeless, including poverty, lack of support from family or friends, substance use, or mental health challenges that may develop or worsen as a result of trauma they experience while serving.

“We should always support the veterans who served our nation, especially when they need it the most. Protecting those who protected us is the right and honorable thing to do. I thank Senator Martins for his efforts to get this law passed,” said Mineola American Legion Commander Carl Marchese.

“The signing of this new law is wonderful news. Veterans are taught during their military service to never leave a fellow soldier behind; the same applies back home. Through this new law, we will have another resource to help veterans in need get the help they deserve. Thank you to Senator Martins for all his work on this issue,” said Mineola Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Commander Tom Scardino.

“We applaud any and every effort to provide help to veterans in need. No one who served their country should be forgotten or abandoned, and this new law will help prevent that from happening. Senator Martins’ efforts are very much appreciated,” said Nassau County American Legion Commander John Hassett.

“Unfortunately, many brave men and women who fought to defend our freedom are now fighting for homes. This measure will enable our heroes to get the help they need and deserve. I applaud Senator Martins for looking out for those who have looked out for us in protecting our country and way of life,” said Bill Santini, Nassau County VFW Commander.

“This law has been a long time coming, and working with Senator Martins, it is now a reality. No man or woman who fights for our country should be homeless because they couldn't get the help they need, but it happens all too often. New York State is now taking

another step to stop that from happening. Washington should follow our lead and pass this on a federal level to provide even more help to veterans in need," said Dick O'Kane, President of the Nassau-Suffolk Building Trades Council.

The new law took effect immediately after it was signed, and the program will be available for 2015 income tax returns.