



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins: Homeless Veterans Assistance Fund Among New Laws for 2015

JACK M. MARTINS January 6, 2015

Measures to Create Jobs, Protect Seniors and Individuals With Disabilities, and Safeguard Minors Among Other New Laws for 2015

A law authored by Senator Jack M. Martins (R-7th Senate District) to help homeless veterans is among the new laws for 2015.

The law creates the Homeless Veterans Assistance Fund to assist and care for homeless veterans with housing and housing-related expenses, overseen 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 law applies to the tax year beginning January 1st.

"We owe our veterans a debt we can't fully repay. At a minimum that debt includes access to needed care and services. We cannot ignore the reality of homeless veterans living among us. This law ensures that those most vulnerable are not forgotten, that they will not be permitted to fall through the cracks, and that we as New Yorkers will meet our commitment," said Senator Martins.

Other new laws for 2015 include:

Hire a Veteran Tax Credit – In 2015, businesses can receive a tax credit for hiring and employing a qualified veteran. The credit is equal to 10 percent of the total amount of wages paid to the qualified veteran during their first full year of employment.

If the veteran is disabled, the credit amount is increased to 15 percent. The credit is capped at \$5,000 per veteran or \$15,000 per disabled veteran. Any unused credit may be carried forward to the following three years.

Corporate Tax Reform – In 2015, tax reform measures included in the 2014-15 state budget will save businesses \$205 million this year and \$501 million annually by SFY 2018-19, when the reforms are fully phased in.

Workers with Disabilities Tax Credit Program – Beginning January 1st, a tax incentive will be available to business owners who employ individuals with developmental disabilities. The credit equals 15 percent of the wages for qualified full-time employees who work at least 30 hours per week, and 10 percent for qualified part-time employees who work at least eight hours per week; each employee must have worked at least six months.

Protecting Minors From Identity Theft – In 2015, credit agencies will be required to place a credit record freeze on the account of a minor when requested by a parent or guardian. This will protect children from identity theft and stop thieves from being able to use stolen information to apply for government benefits, open bank and credit cards, apply for loans or rent a place to live.

Protecting People in Adult Homes – This new law requires adult care facilities and assisted living residences to perform criminal background checks on prospective direct care staff for nursing homes and home care agencies.

Long Term Health Care Insurance – In 2010, the Legislature enacted a law that allows end-of-life care for people in nursing homes to be financed using accelerated payments from life insurance. Starting January 1, 2015, the measure will be expanded to allow for this type of financing to be used for people receiving end-of-life care in hospice, adult day care services, and palliative care or by a long-term home health care provider.

In addition, the law establishes a public awareness program to encourage individuals to purchase life insurance and/or long-term care insurance. Encouraging more people to finance their own long-term care will reduce future Medicaid expenditures, as well as provide greater peace-of-mind for families dealing with end-of-life care for loved ones.