



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

MILITARY RESERVES CRITICAL TO OUR NATION'S DEFENSE

PATTY RITCHIE June 27, 2011

When a member of the Army Reserves asked me why some citizen soldiers are not eligible for the same kind of property tax breaks that benefit others who serve their country, I have to admit I was puzzled.

The Reserve units of our Armed Forces are a critical part of our nation's military. They, and their families, make significant sacrifices so they can train and prepare to serve America in times of crisis.

They play an important role in our nation's defenses and deserve the same respect and thanks that we give to the rest of our military.

That's why when I discovered he was correct that our nation's military reserves currently are not eligible for the same property tax breaks that active duty soldiers receive, I decided to do something about it.

I introduced Senate Bill 5231, legislation that when it passes both houses of the Legislature, will allow local governments to provide the same property tax exemption to reservists that are currently available to active duty military.

I asked my friend and colleague, Assembly member Felix Ortiz, to join me in a bipartisan effort to help our military by introducing companion legislation in his house of the

Legislature.

While I was successful in winning passage of the legislation in the Senate, time ran out before we were able to win passage of the bill in the Assembly.

But that doesn't mean I'm giving up. I'll be spending the coming year working with friends of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard Reserves, veterans organizations, and active duty military organizations to join me in urging our friends in the Assembly to support this long overdue piece of legislation.

In an era when it's become common place for Reserve units to suddenly find themselves deployed and placed in harm's way, our nation and our state has a special obligation to insure that the men and women we ask to risk their lives on our behalf are treated with fairness and respect here at home .

You can help. If you belong to a fraternal group, veteran's organization or any other kind of association, ask your local group and its state organization to go on record in support of this legislation. By working together, you can help make your voice heard in Albany. You can help make sure our state Legislature treats our Reserves fairly.