



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George Amedore

## SENATOR GEORGE AMEDORE AND AT&T PARTNER WITH CELL PHONES FOR SOLDIERS TO PROVIDE TROOPS WITH FREE CALLS HOME

GEORGE AMEDORE November 20, 2015



In honor of Military Family Appreciation Month, and with the holiday season upon us, Senator George Amedore and AT&T have teamed up with the nonprofit Cell Phones For Soldiers and are asking residents throughout the 46th Senate District to help troops call home by donating unwanted cellular phones and tablets.

Proceeds from the recycled devices are used to buy long distance calling cards for troops at

home and abroad. Although the military landscape is ever changing, as many as 200,000 troops are serving in the United States military overseas. By donating to Cell Phones For Soldiers, local residents and businesses can provide a lifeline for America's bravest. The holidays are also the most important time for active military to be able to stay in touch with family and is also a time when many get new mobile devices that would be ideal for donating for this important charity.

From now through December 20th, area residents and businesses can donate their unwanted cell phones and/or tablets at the following locations:

### **Montgomery County**

- > Senator Amedore's District Office, 20 Park Street, Room 121, Fonda
- > Canajoharie Public Library, 2 Erie Blvd, Canajoharie
- > Amsterdam Free Library, 28 Church Street, Amsterdam

### **Schenectady County**

- > AT&T Store, 404 Balltown, Schenectady
- > Duanesburg Town Hall, 5853 Western Turnpike, Duanesburg
- > Princetown Town Hall, 165 Princetown Plaza, Schenectady
- > Rotterdam Public Library, 1100 North Westcott Road, Rotterdam

### **Albany County**

- > AT&T Store, One Crossgates Mall, Guilderland
- > Guilderland Public Library, 2228 Western Avenue, Guilderland
- > Albany County Sheriff's Office, 58 Verda Avenue, Clarksville

### **Greene County**

- > New Baltimore Town Hall, 3809 County Route 51, Hannacroix
- > Greene County Veterans Services, 159 Jefferson Heights, Catskill
- > AT&T Store, 90 Catskill Commons, Catskill
- > Cairo Public Library, 512 Main Street, Cairo
- > Windham Public Library, 5379 Route 23, Windham

### **Ulster County**

- > Saugerties Town Hall, 4 High Street
- > Senator Amedore's District Office, 721 Broadway, Suite 100, Kingston
- > Lloyd Town Hall, 12 Church Street, Highland
- > AT&T Store, 1137 Ulster Ave., Kingston

Cell Phones For Soldiers was founded in 2004 by teenagers Robbie and Brittany Bergquist at the ages of 12 and 13, respectively. The charity has since provided more than 216 million

minutes of free talk time to servicemen and women stationed around the world through its calling card program, Minutes That Matter. Funds raised from the recycling of cellular phones are used to purchase prepaid international calling cards. On average, Cell Phones For Soldiers distributes 1,500 calling cards each week to military bases worldwide, and supports care package programs, deployment ceremonies and VA hospitals.

“Each year we have been humbled by the number of people and organizations like AT&T and New York State Senator George Amedore that take part in this important initiative to support our military members,” said co-founder Robbie Bergquist. “The communication gap between those serving and their families is a crucial need that Cell Phones For Soldiers is committed to addressing for years to come.”

“Our military men and women sacrifice so much on our behalf, and this program is one small way we can give back to those who serve our nation,” said Senator George Amedore, who serves on the Senate Standing Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs. “The holiday time can be an especially difficult time for our armed forces, and I am honored to partner with AT&T and Cell Phones for Soldiers. It is a small gesture on behalf of our residences, but it makes a huge difference in the lives of our heroes who will be able to stay connected with their family and loved ones back home.”

“AT&T has a long and proud history of supporting both veterans, active military personnel and their families through various company initiatives and by establishing external partnerships with organizations that provide necessary services, such as Cell Phones For Soldiers,” according to Marissa Shorenstein, president of AT&T New York. “We are privileged to partner with Senator Amedore and Cell Phones For Soldiers to encourage the community

to join us and donate their unused cell phones and tablets to honor and thank all of the brave men and women that protect and serve our country by helping them keep connected with their friends, family and loved ones at home."

Senator Amedore was joined at the announcement by AT&T executives, and former Staff Sergeant Ryan Quay, of Knox, New York, who served in the Army from 2001-2015. Staff Sgt. Quay served overseas in Korea from 2002-03 and did two tours in Afghanistan, from August 2003-May 2004 and from May 2012-May 2013.

For every donated device worth at least \$5, Cell Phones For Soldiers is able to provide two and a half hours of free talk time to deployed troops via calling cards.

To prepare your mobile phone for donation, here are some tips on how to erase all personal information that may be stored on it to protect your privacy:

- > Remove your phone's SIM card. Erase your address book, photos, messages and other stored information
- > Restore the device factory settings on your device
- > For instructions on how to do this, go to owner's manual or to the manufacturer's web site

Since 2004, more than 11.7 million phones have been recycled or repurposed. Approximately half of the phones processed are reconditioned and reused. Phones and components that cannot be refurbished are dismantled and responsibly recycled to reclaim materials, including: gold, silver and platinum from circuit boards; copper wiring from phone chargers;

and nickel, iron, cadmium and lead from battery packs.

AT&T's partnership with Cell Phones For Soldiers stems from the company's longstanding mission to connect members of the nation's military with their loved ones back home. Founded in 2004, and expanded through financial support from AT&T, Cell Phones For Soldiers is a non-profit that uses funds from recycled cell phones to buy prepaid phone cards for our service men and women, helping them connect with their families. Over the past two years, AT&T has proudly supported Cell Phones For Soldiers' "Helping Heroes Home" initiative, a program designed to provide emergency funds for returning veterans to alleviate communication challenges as well as physical, emotional and assimilation hardships. Additionally, AT&T and its customers have donated more than \$4.6 million and distributed more than 600,000 AT&T prepaid calling cards to service men and women overseas since 2007.

For nearly 100 years, AT&T has remained dedicated to supporting active military personnel, veterans and their families. AT&T is a founding member of the 100,000 Jobs Mission, launched in 2011 with 10 other companies to commit to hiring 100,000 veterans by 2020. The coalition has grown to more than 180 corporate members and has tripled its commitment to hiring at least 300,000 veterans by 2020. In November 2013 AT&T increased its veteran recruiting efforts with the goal of hiring 10,000 veterans and their family members into career opportunities over the next five years. Currently, AT&T has hired more than 7,000 veterans and their family members, and is well on its way of achieving the goal by 2018.

For more information on Cell Phones For Soldiers, please

visit [www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com](http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com).

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