



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Murphy tells Regents to put military personnel, families, before illegal immigrants

TERRENCE MURPHY March 12, 2016

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ALBANY, NY - The public comment period on the Board of Regent's controversial decision to grant 53 types of professional licenses to illegal immigrants began on this week, and Senator Terrence Murphy, who opposes the ruling, is urging the public to make their feelings known. Murphy sent his own letter to the Board of Regents in an effort to shed light on the fact that military personnel and their families are being shortchanged.

Murphy says that if the Board of Regents believes it can unilaterally grant professional licenses to illegal immigrants, they could just as easily do so, without the need for legislation, for military service members and their spouses seeking out-of-state and/or military license reciprocity. "It's unfair to subject the spouse of someone who is protecting our freedoms, to the massive bureaucratic hurdles New York State puts in front of them," he said.

The Senator has said he feels that the regents should be focused more on protecting veterans and military families. Recently, he sponsored and unanimously passed a bill to provide unemployment benefits to military spouses. Another bill that Murphy voted for, Senate bill S2947, would streamline the professional licensing application process for spouses of military personnel who are already licensed in the same profession by another state.

The Director of the New York State Division of Veterans Affairs seemed to share Murphy's assessment with regard to addressing the issue of professional licenses for military spouses. Eric J. Hesse, director of the Division of Veterans Affairs, called on the State Assembly to pass the legislation that Murphy voted for in the State Senate.

"New York has the dubious distinction of being the only state in the nation that has failed to pass a law that honors the professional licensure of military spouses recognized in other states," Hesse said. "This absurd inequity strains military families who are relocated on orders in the service of their nation, and creates unnecessary roadblocks for spouses to practice their careers and help provide for their families. The Governor strongly supports this bill, which the New York State Senate has previously passed, and has agreed to swiftly sign legislation it in order to right this wrong. The Assembly must join us and act now to ensure that military families are treated the same in New York as they are in the rest of the country."

"The men and women in the armed forces fulfilling their military obligations don't have control over their transfers, and their spouses are being penalized by our State, forcing them into long and costly processes to obtain employment in order to help support their families," Senator Murphy said. "Jobs are hard enough to come by. This bill will cut through the red tape and keep spouses working."

Senator Murphy's letter to the Regents notes how occupations that require a state license often carry state-specific conditions and procedures for employment that can cause lengthy delays for spouses that relocate and are seeking work. These delays and the re-licensing process can discourage military spouses from practicing their professions.

Murphy said, "The New York State Board of Regents needs to be more focused on supporting our military personnel and their families rather than passing constitutionally questionable immigration policies. I urge them to take the necessary actions to implement the common sense policies laid forth in S.2947 rather than investing time and taxpayer dollars exploring a proposal which is not only out of touch with New York's values, but places laws breakers in front of military service members and their families."