



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

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SUSAN SERINO March 23, 2016

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Bill To Create MTA Half-Fare Rate Program for Vets Passes Senate

ALBANY, NY—Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park) announced today that her bill (S. 5545A) to create a half-fare rate program for veterans utilizing Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) services passed unanimously in the Senate.

“Our veterans have dedicated their lives to protecting us and ensuring our freedom and for that, they not only deserve our respect, but our gratitude,” said Senator Serino. “While words will never be enough to express the full weight of our thanks, empowering our veterans to live full lives after their service is just one way that we can show them how much they are valued. Increasing access to transportation services by creating a half-fare program has the potential to significantly improve quality of life for veterans living, working and receiving health care in the MTA region.”

Serino continued, “With all that is going on in the world today, I think it is especially important to encourage veterans to ride our public transportation system, as they add that extra layer of safety and security.”

New York State is the proud home of one of the highest veteran populations in the United States, with over 400,000 veterans concentrated in the MTA service area alone. However, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs notes that New York has lost over 30% of our veteran population between 2000-2015.

“New York’s high cost of living, especially in the MTA region, is driving people out of our state each and every day,” said Senator Serino. “If we want to make New York a place where people, and our veterans especially, want to live instead of leave, we need to work actively to make the state and the region more affordable. This bill is a step in the right direction and I urge my colleagues in the Assembly to make it a priority.

It should be noted that there is precedent for such a program given the fact the MTA already offers a half-fare rate program for seniors and individuals with a qualifying disability.

The bill has been sent to the Assembly where it is sponsored by Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (D—Bronx). It passed unanimously in the Senate last year, but the Assembly failed to pass it.

Today's announcement comes on the heels of her introduction of another bill that would cut MTA-related fees for residents of both Dutchess and Putnam counties. Specifically, Senator Serino's bill (S. 7052) aims to make the MTA region more affordable by exempting Dutchess, Putnam, Orange, and Rockland from the Metropolitan commuter transportation district supplemental registration fee.

“For far too long, our communities have taken a backseat to the needs of the MTA and I hear from far too many constituents who are fed up with paying a fee for a service they don't utilize,” Senator Serino said. “At a time when we are finally starting to put the spotlight on fixing our crumbling roads and bridges, we should be taking steps to improve resources that we all depend on and we should be working to provide taxpayers with the relief they deserve. This bill does just that.”