



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## “Homes for Heroes” Program Will Help Disabled Veterans Live Independently

CATHARINE YOUNG April 6, 2016

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ALBANY – Veterans who need modifications to their homes in order to live independently because of physical challenges could see assistance thanks to [legislation](#) passed by the New York State Senate.

The “Homes for Heroes” program, authored by Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- 57th District), would assist New York State’s veteran population by instituting a statutory program within

the Division of Housing and Community Renewal to retrofit veterans' houses so that they meet the unique needs of service-disabled veterans.

“Far too many of our nation’s brave fighting men and women come home after serving our country and face significant difficulty accessing and affording housing. They have given so much for us and they deserve to live safely, comfortably and productively in the setting of their choice. By ensuring that when a hero returns to civilian life they are able to return to the home of their choice, we are paying homage to their service and their sacrifice,” said Senator Young.

“Veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars are returning with missing limbs and traumatic brain injuries. The ‘Homes for Heroes’ program will provide them hope for their future and the assurance that they will be able to live in a place that is ready to meet their specific requirements while still being close to friends and family,” she said.

“Our state and nation also has an aging population of veterans who served during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Many of these distinguished service members are in need of wheelchair ramps and other modifications to the physical design of their homes. These renovations can often be costly for seniors on fixed incomes, so providing them with this assistance will help them get the most out of their golden years,” Senator Young said.

Under the program, grants would be provided to municipalities and not-for-profits to help retrofit and refurbish homes for disabled veterans. Last year’s enacted budget included \$19 million for a Veteran Access to Home program. Enactment of this legislation would establish a permanent program in law and help to ensure that funding provided in last year’s budget is more effectively marketed and targeted to those in need of assistance.

“Regrettably, the Assembly failed to act on this critical legislation again last year. I strongly urge them to join the Senate and guarantee a brighter future for all of our distinguished veterans,” she said.

The Senate also recently passed several other pieces of legislation to support area veterans.

[Senate Bill 877](#), establishes a Veterans' Gerontological Advisory Committee that would provide the New York State Office of the Aging with guidance on concerns for veterans. The group would share information and challenges associated with caring for aging veterans, and their families. The Committee would advise the state on caregiver initiatives, alternative housing trends for veterans, long term and continuing care, as well as educating staff and the public on a wide range of issues affecting veterans and seniors.

[Senate Bill 4627](#), would provide veterans who are 100 percent service-disabled with a full exemption from real property taxes.

“Our veterans have served with honor and distinction, and we are all grateful for their sacrifices. The men and women of our country’s armed services have traveled around the globe on behalf of our nation. They keep us safe and help preserve our way of life and the values we hold dear. By advancing these measures, we are expressing our gratitude for their service and relieving them of a financial burden that might otherwise force them out of New York, or even worse onto the streets,” said Senator Young.

[Senate Bill 3137](#) will help veterans navigate their health care coverage by increasing awareness of the various health care options available to veterans by establishing a clear, concise list of contact information for the various state and federal agencies that exist to assist veterans in determine the best course of treatment.

Finally, [Senate Bill 3826](#) establishes March 13 as “K9 Veterans Day,” in recognition of the thousands of dogs that have served with honor, dignity and valor throughout our nation’s history.