



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins' Legislation to Honor New York Veterans Passed By Senate

JACK M. MARTINS May 5, 2016

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Senator Jack M. Martins (R-7th Senate District) announced that the New York State Senate passed legislation he sponsored to honor the heroic contributions of New Yorkers to America's victory in World War I. The legislation (S6856A) would create a statewide World War I 100th anniversary commemoration commission to help honor the role New York State and New Yorkers played in the war.

"America's victory in World War I was due in large part to the contributions of the brave New Yorkers who answered the call to serve. As the 100th anniversary of the United States' entry into World War I approaches, it's important to pay tribute to these hometown heroes and educate the current generation about the vital part New Yorkers played," said Senator Martins.

2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the United States' entry into World War I. New Yorkers played a pivotal role in the conflict and the Allied forces' ultimate victory in 1918. Ten percent of all the American military personnel in World War I came from New York. Over 13,000 New Yorkers made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their country during the conflict. New York was home to the 369th Infantry Regiment, known as the "Harlem Hellfighters," the first African-American regiment to serve with the American Expeditionary

Forces, and the 69th Infantry Regiment, known as the “Fighting 69th,” which included a Medal of Honor recipient and many others who distinguished themselves with their selfless acts of heroism.

New York State’s World War I 100th anniversary commemoration commission would be tasked with:

- Planning, developing, and promoting commemorative programs;
- Assisting with efforts to develop or enhance educational institutions, sites, and museums related to World War I for educational, recreational, and tourism purposes; and
- Encouraging private organizations, local governments, and state agencies to organize and participate in activities commemorating the World War I centennial.

The Commission would be required to present its action plan to the Governor and the Legislature no later than June 30, 2017.

The federal government has established a similar national World War I Centennial Commission, as have a number of other states, including Virginia, Georgia, and Ohio, to highlight the contributions of their citizens. New York City also created its own World War I Centennial Committee.