



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Marine Corps Vet Sanders Commemorates Memorial Day With Parade March

JAMES SANDERS JR. May 31, 2016



State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village), a Marine Corps veteran, commemorated Memorial Day by marching in three local Queens parades yesterday, participating in ceremonies in Laurelton, Rosedale and Little Neck-Douglaston. Although for many of us Memorial Day marks the unofficial start of summer and is a time for barbecues, going to the beach or spending time with family, reminded residents not forget the true meaning of the holiday.

“On Memorial Day we remember with solemn gratitude those who have given their lives for our freedom,” Sanders said. “As a Marine Corps veteran, it is especially important to me that we never forget the tremendous sacrifice our service members make every day to protect our American way of life.”

At the Laurelton Memorial Day Parade, Senator Sanders spoke about the origin of the holiday, which he said began after the Civil War, when the formerly enslaved African Americans who had been freed, began burying union soldiers who had perished during that battle.

“The confederate states were only burying confederate soldiers, but no one was burying the union,” Sanders said. “The black slaves started this day of memorial by making sure the union soldiers were buried with honor, and every year they came forward to honor the fallen.”

Also along the Laurelton parade route, Sanders met with Simona Francis, who lost her son, Army Private First Class Leron A. Wilson in 2007. At age 18, he was the youngest soldier from the New York area to have been killed in action during Operation Iraqi Freedom. In 2009, then-City Council Member Sanders sponsored legislation to have 145th Avenue between Farmers Boulevard and Arthur Street in Springfield Gardens renamed for Wilson.

“It is incumbent upon government to make sure that it does not send people into harm’s way if there is no need for it,” Sanders said. “If there is nothing that attacks this country, then we should not go looking for wars, but if there is something that attacks this country, we should see it through to the bitter end.”

At the Rosedale Memorial Day Parade, Sanders honored with a proclamation, Detective

Jovoda Cooper, Community Affairs Officer with the 105<sup>th</sup> Precinct, who was also the parade's grand marshal. Sanders also participated in a wreath laying ceremony at the conclusion of the parade, which took place at the Veterans & Vietnam Memorial Monument on Francis Lewis Boulevard and Sunrise Highway.

At the Little Neck-Douglaston Memorial Day Parade, Senator Sanders marched alongside Mayor Bill de Blasio, and brought greetings to the hundreds of people who had lined up along the parade route for the celebration, now in its 89<sup>th</sup> year. It featured marching bands, veterans groups, soldiers, community leaders, elected officials and much more.