



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Flanagan

Senate Majority Leader Flanagan Applauds Signing of Veteran's Equality Act Into Law

JOHN J. FLANAGAN June 2, 2016

| ISSUE: **VETERANS**



Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan (2nd Senate District) applauded Governor Andrew Cuomo's signing of the Veteran's Equality Act which will better recognize the service of all our state's veterans. The legislation (S.7160), which goes into effect immediately, allows all honorably discharged veterans who are members of the Public Employee Retirement System to purchase up to three years of service credit for their time served in the military.

“Every man and woman who makes the selfless decision to serve in the United States military is fully deserving of every benefit our state can offer. Their service, either in peacetime or time of conflict, allows us to enjoy our freedoms and the lives we lead. Governor Cuomo’s approval will be greatly appreciated by all the veterans in public service who are owed a debt of gratitude by our state,” stated Senator Flanagan.

Prior to the bill’s signing, only veterans who served in certain conflicts, including World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, were able to purchase pension credits. The new law expands eligibility to all veterans who were honorably discharged and who work in the public sector regardless of when and where they served.

The bill has passed both houses of the Legislature with overwhelming support in each of the prior two years but was vetoed by Governor Cuomo in 2014 and 2015. The success of this measure continues the Senate’s commitment to New Yorkers who currently serve and have served our nation.

Recently, the Senate passed a package of bills to benefit our state’s veterans including:

- S6577A which allows New York State income tax filers to contribute to the Veterans’ Home Assistance Fund;
- S2245C which gives school districts the option to offer real property tax exemptions to eligible veterans;
- S1200A which provides an increase in the rates of annuities payable to veterans and surviving spouses of veterans from \$1,000 to \$1,500;
- S3408 which allows any veteran who has served this nation to be awarded a high school degree based on their knowledge and experience gained while in service;

- S2263 which allows those with military service and who were honorably discharged to attend classes at the State University of New York (SUNY) and the City University of New York (CUNY) on a tuition-free audit basis; and
- S870 which permits each county, city, town, or village to adopt a local law to authorize veterans who have not been discharged or released from a current, subsequent military service to receive an additional veteran real property owner tax exemption.

All of these bills were sent to the Assembly for further action.

The Senate also gave final passage to S3137C, sponsored by Senator Tom Croci (3rd Senate District), which requires the State Division of Veteran Affairs to maintain a fact sheet on their website containing contact information for all Veterans Integrated Service Networks in New York and for the U.S. Veterans Health Administration to help veterans better navigate the health care system. That legislation has been delivered to Governor Cuomo for his approval.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2015-S7160

- Introduced
- ◦ In Committee Assembly
- ◦ In Committee Senate

- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Provides credit to members of public retirement systems of the state for military service rendered during certain periods; appropriation

April 01, 2016

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **William Larkin**

Do you support this bill?