



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Senate Approves Addabbo Bill to Provide Veterans with Academic Credit for Military Experience

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. May 17, 2016

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Howard Beach, NY (May 19, 2016) In an effort to help New York veterans earn college credit for their military experience, the full State Senate recently approved legislation (S.4233) sponsored by Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. that would allow former servicemen and women to pursue service-related academic credit at State University of New York (SUNY) and City University of New York (CUNY) institutions.

“Our veterans develop new skills and knowledge every day while serving in the military,” said Addabbo, the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs. “My bill will help to make sure they can get academic credit for all they have learned and complete their college degrees more quickly. This will also help to ensure that our veterans are even better equipped to re-enter the workforce once their tours of duty are completed.”

Addabbo’s bill was one focus of a roundtable discussion held by the Senate Veterans Committee at the State Capitol in late February.

In order for veterans to receive academic credit for their military training or service, the college courses in which they are enrolled would need to meet the standards of the American

Council on Education (ACE) or otherwise adhere to equivalent standards for awarding credit to students for life experience. While the ACE is already engaged in efforts to award credit to veterans for their service and training, Addabbo's bill would make it clear that SUNY and CUNY could accept military transcripts as a source of transfer credit. Veterans would need to be enrolled full-time in college as undergraduates and have been honorably discharged. There would be no cap on the number of credits and qualifying veteran students would not be charged fees for tuition for the credits.

Addabbo noted that such veterans' organizations as the Jewish War Veterans of the USA, Department of New York and Ladies Auxiliary, have identified this bill as a priority for action during the 2016 legislative session.

"I am very pleased that my Senate colleagues have joined me in moving this legislation forward," said Addabbo. "While employment opportunities may be slowly improving for veterans as our economy continues to recover from the deep recession we suffered several years ago, I believe it is very important that we do whatever we can to help our servicemen and women better prepare themselves for the job market when they come home. It's the least we can do for veterans who often put themselves in harm's way to keep us safe and uphold our country's most cherished principles and values."

Addabbo noted that it was good news when the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics reported this past November that unemployment among all veterans in the nation reached a record seven-year low in October of 2015.

"However, it's important to remember that this welcome low of 3.9 percent unemployment for all veterans in the United States still means that about 422,000 former members of the armed forces are still looking for jobs," he pointed out. "We have more work to do to boost employment opportunities for our former servicemen and women."

The Assembly companion bill, is under review by the Assembly Higher Education Committee.