



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

## Helping Veterans: Murphy authors, passes bill giving tax payers the option to donate to veterans' home assistance fund

TERRENCE MURPHY May 6, 2016



ALBANY, NY – Senator Terrence Murphy is building on the promise he made to veterans to make their welfare one of his top priorities. A bill passed by the Senate yesterday, Senate Bill S6577, was sponsored by Murphy and allows tax payers to elect to make a contribution to the state's veterans' homes through their personal tax returns.

“Our country has been privileged to have the most courageous men and women in the world serve in our armed forces,” Senator Murphy said. “They risked their lives to protect our

freedom. These dedicated veterans deserve the utmost care, which many receive through the statewide veterans' home system. However, with health care costs on the rise, something more needed to be done. Establishing an additional funding mechanism for state run veterans' homes is the least we can do for those brave men and women that put their lives on the line."

According to the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, there are 892,221 veterans in New York State. More than half – 456,591 – are sixty-five years old or older. The new legislation provides a tax line to assist the state run veterans' homes in their efforts to provide veterans with appropriate healthcare and housing in their aging years.

"As a veteran who has the utmost respect for those who have served our country, and as a Sheriff who knows well how vulnerable our elderly and disabled can be, I appreciate very much Senator Murphy's sponsorship of the new legislation and his fellow legislators' support of it," Putnam County Sheriff Donald Smith, a retired Army Brigadier General, said. "This legislative initiative will enhance the quality of care for our oldest and neediest veterans. Moreover, I think that giving folks an easy way to donate to the state-operated Veterans Homes-by just checking off a box on their tax returns-is a terrific idea."

The Commissioner of Taxation and Finance will include space on personal income tax return forms to allow taxpayers to make a contribution to veterans' homes. In addition, a new section of the state finance law calls for the creation of the Veterans' Home Assistance Fund, which will be funded by tax donations earmarked specifically for the support of five veterans homes in the state. The five homes are located in New York City, Oxford, Batavia, Montrose and at Stony Brook University.

"I am pleased that this bill will be moving forward, which will bring further imperative relief to the veterans' home system," Dutchess County Legislator and combat veteran Marc

Coviello said. "It is always extremely important that we create new and innovative ways for our communities to come together, both local businesses and private citizens, to continue to support the men and women who have served this country so honorably. Veterans deserve elected officials that consistently advocate for them and I am very proud to say that Senator Murphy is one of the strongest advocates for our veterans in the New York State Senate."

Former Assemblyman Robert Castelli, a former ranking member on the Assembly Veterans Affairs' Committee, and Vietnam War combat veteran said, "I strongly support the passage of S6577 and acknowledge that it is critical that we as citizens support our older veterans as they enter their twilight years. They have served us courageously and it is up to us to thank them and serve them."

The bill was sent to the Assembly where it is sponsored by Assemblyman Michael Miller of Queens.