



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Senator Murphy votes to expand Compassionate Care Act to veterans

TERRENCE MURPHY May 9, 2017

| ISSUE: **PTSD, VETERANS, COMPASSIONATE CARE ACT, MEDICAL MARIJUANA**



Albany, NY - Since taking office in 2014, Senator Terrence Murphy has been an advocate for our veterans, particularly those who served their country, and are now paying the price as they suffer through sleepless nights and try to deal with constant pain. Relief for those veterans may be on the way. With Senator Murphy voting yes, legislation to add post-traumatic stress disorder as a condition for which a patient can be administered medical marijuana cleared the Senate's health committee Tuesday.

"If medical marijuana can bring a little relief to someone who bravely served our country and is now in pain, then I'm for it," said Senator Terrence Murphy. "Veterans with PTSD have had few options up until now, such as ineffective pharmaceutical drugs with horrible and addictive side effects. Advances in medical marijuana have proven to provide relief - it has relieved symptoms like night terrors, severe anxiety, hypertension and has proven to reduce aggression and suicide rates. Considering the alarming statistics related to the suicide rate of our veterans, we need to provide them with every option possible. I don't know anyone who would be against that."

The legislation (S05629), sponsored in the by Senator Diane Savino, has its share of detractors in the Senate, but Republicans who were once skeptical of medical marijuana have recently warmed to the idea. Senator Savino and Assemblyman sponsor Dick Gottfried - the architects of the state's medical marijuana program - received bipartisan support at the committee hearing.

PTSD was on the list of qualifying conditions in the original medical marijuana bill in 2014 pushed for by Gottfried and Savino, but was removed during the final negotiations with the Cuomo administration, which has been measured in its approach toward medical marijuana.

Last week, Governor Andrew Cuomo said that his administration was "considering a number of possible illnesses that would be added to the eligibility for medical marijuana."

Senator Kemp Hannon, head of the chamber's health committee, said earlier this month that tweaks to the program are being discussed, and that the Senate will likely be addressing the issue later this legislative session.

The passage of the bill in committee was quickly lauded by Valley Agriceuticals, which was not awarded a license to grow and sell medical marijuana initially, but is being considered for

a license as the state moves to add more growers and dispensaries.

"The Legislature, Governor and DOH have been moving forward steadily to make New York's medical marijuana program stronger and better for patients," Valley Agriceuticals President Erik Holling said. "Today marks yet another step in that direction."

The legislation now awaits a vote in the Senate, where it appears to be gaining momentum.