



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Fred Akshar

Senate Passes Bills to Protect, Assist and Honor Current and Former Military Service Members

FRED AKSHAR May 23, 2017

| ISSUE: **VETERANS, VETERANS & ACTIVE DUTY**



The Senate today passed a wide variety of bills all aimed at caring for and memorializing the courageous men and women who have served in our military, as well as those still serving today. The legislative package will safeguard the welfare of those who protect our lives, ease their fiscal burdens, show them the path to crucial benefits, and venerate their service to this country.

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Senator Akshar said, “Veterans put their lives on the line and sacrifice so much, it’s crucial we don’t forget about them after they return home. We are a state and a nation that honors and supports those who have and continue to protect the freedoms we hold dear. I’m proud to join my colleagues in the Senate in doing what we can to say ‘Thank You’ and let our veterans know we have their back.”

Protecting our Service Members:

Increasing Penalties for Violence against Active Duty and Reserve Military Members:

- Bill S927 establishes a class D felony for the crime of inciting violence against both active duty and reserve military service members in an effort to curb the destructive trend of targeting those who have made a career out of protecting the citizens of this country.
- Bill S955 makes it a class C felony to commit assault against an active-duty soldier if the accused’s intent was to prevent that soldier from performing their lawful duty. Both measures are sponsored by Senator Croci.

Making it More Affordable to Live in New York:

Establishing a Task Force on Veteran Employment Opportunities:

- Bill S936 creates a task force to study and improve the job market for veterans. The task force, to be made up of stakeholders within state government, the private sector, and institutions of higher education, will be charged with holding annual public hearings and making recommendations to the legislature regarding ways the state can assist those who served our country in finding and maintaining meaningful employment opportunities;

Helping Veterans Afford a Home:

- Bill S5158 assists service-related disabled veterans in affording a home by giving those with a VA disability rating of 40 percent or higher a preference in applications to the state's AffordableHome Ownership Development Program;

Assisting More Veterans in Applying for Public Housing:

- Bill S1482 expands eligibility for veterans in public housing to include those of recent conflicts, and requires granting of a preference for public housing to veterans or families of veterans who have a military service connected disability;

Providing Tax Relief to Reservists Called to Active Duty:

- ?Bill S959, sponsored by Senator Croci, allows municipalities to offer the alternative veterans' property tax exemption to members of the military who are currently serving on active duty. Under current law, individuals who are in active military service need to wait until their service in uniform is finished in order to receive the tax benefits extended by participating municipalities;

Providing Tax Relief to Reservists Called to Active Duty:

- Bill S2520A allows the governing body of a city, village, town, or county to exempt reservists called to active duty from property taxes. The exemption, which would span the time of active duty, would ease the financial burden that reservists and their families often face when they are called upon to serve;

Extending Property Tax Exemptions to Certain Reservist Veterans:

- Bill S5411 permits towns to offer reserve military veterans who participated in Operation Graphic Hand the alternative veteran property tax exemption.

Connecting Service Members and Veterans with Important Services for them and their Families:

Ensuring Continuity of Care for Service Members' Families:

- Bill S5807 ensures that service members who have dependent family members with developmental disabilities continue to receive services from the state without interruption to guarantee better continuity of care and better outcomes for the individual;

Giving All Active Duty Members of the Military Greater Access to State Parks:

- Bill S3571, sponsored by Senator Fred Akshar streamlines the process for active duty service members to receive their free Empire Passport for state park usage. Current law requires the Empire Passport to be filled out annually and to be received in the mail, making the entire process lengthy and cumbersome. Active duty service members and their immediate family would instead be eligible for the free pass by providing their military ID upon entry;

Simplifying the Process for Military Personnel to be Married:

- Bill S1013 authorizes military personnel scheduled for deployment in less than 30 days to get married within 24 hours of receiving their marriage license. Currently the mandatory waiting period of 24 hours for couples to get married is a hindrance to those expected to serve our country overseas and on short notice;

Expand Opportunities and Services Available to Service-Disabled Veterans:

- Bill S2424B directs the State Division of Veterans' Affairs to develop a plan for a comprehensive statewide program of coordinated services for service-disabled veterans. The plan would include: educational training and retraining services and facilities; health, medical, and rehabilitation services; employment and re-employment services; housing options; transportation options; long-term care options; personal care; day program service options; family outreach; and other essential services that maximize existing resources.

Showing Respect for and Recognition of Military Personnel:

Increasing Availability to Financial Relief for Blind Veterans:

- Bill S200 provides an increase in the base rates of annuities payable to blind veterans and surviving spouses of blind veterans from \$1,000 to \$1,500. It also clarifies the formula for annual increases to take into account the latest federal increase for veterans' annuities;

Commemorating the Service of Veterans with Personalized License Plates:

- Bill S4464 authorizes the issuance of distinctive license plates for veterans while also exempting them from the one-time service and annual registration fees to keep their

license plates updated;

The bills have been sent to the Assembly.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2017-S927

- 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

-

Relates to inciting violence against an active duty member of the military or the reserves

January 05, 2017

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by [Thomas D. Croci](#)

Do you support this bill?

2017-S955

- 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
-

[Relates to assault on a member of the military or reserves](#)

January 05, 2017

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Thomas D. Croci**

Do you support this bill?

2017-S936

- Introduced

- ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Vetoed By Governor

- Signed By Governor

-

Establishes a task force on veteran employment opportunities; and provides for the repeal of such provisions

January 05, 2017

Senate Floor Calendar

2017-S5158

- 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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[Preferences under the affordable home ownership development program for service related disabled veterans](#)

March 09, 2017

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by [Michael H. Ranzenhofer](#)

Do you support this bill?

2017-S1482

- 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
-

Relates to veterans' eligibility for public housing

January 09, 2017

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Tony Avella**

Do you support this bill?

2017-S959

- 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
-

Relates to the alternative veterans property tax exemption

January 05, 2017

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Thomas D. Croci**

Do you support this bill?

2017-S2520A

-
- 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

 -

Authorizes a real property tax exemption for certain eligible reservists

January 13, 2017

In Senate Committee [Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs](#)

Sponsored by [Patrick M. Gallivan](#)

Do you support this bill?

2017-S5411

- 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
-

Allows towns to adopt a local law or resolution to include reserve veterans for the veteran alternative exemption

March 27, 2017

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Thomas D. Croci**

Do you support this bill?

2017-S5807

- 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

-

Relates to eligibility for dependents of military service members for certain developmental disability services

May 01, 2017

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Robert G. Ort**

Do you support this bill?

2017-S3571

- 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

-

Relates to annual vehicular access for active duty service members

January 24, 2017

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Fred Akshar**

Do you support this bill?

2017-S1013

- 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
-

Authorizes certain military personnel to get married within twenty-four hours of receiving a marriage license

January 06, 2017

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by [Joseph E. Robach](#)

Do you support this bill?

2017-S2424B

- 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
-

Directs the state director of veterans' affairs to submit a plan to the veterans' affairs commission for the provision of services to service-disabled veterans

January 13, 2017

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by [Jesse Hamilton](#)

Do you support this bill?

2017-S200

- 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 for an increase in the rates of annuities payable to veterans and surviving spouses of veterans

December 30, 2016

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Kathleen A. Marchione**

Do you support this bill?

2017-S4464

- 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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Relates to the issuance of distinctive license plates for members of veterans organizations

February 15, 2017

In Senate Committee **Finance**

Sponsored by **Chris Jacobs**

Do you support this bill?