



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael H. Ranzenhofer

## Supporting Our Servicemen and Women

MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER November 28, 2018

Look for...

Senator Mike Ranzenhofer's  
Monthly Column

...In your local newspaper  
the third week of every month

Senator Ranzenhofer's column appeared in the Amherst and Clarence Bees on November 21st. We must always remember that our freedoms have been fought for and defended by current and former members of the United States Armed Forces, many of whom made the ultimate sacrifice. I have always worked to support New York's courageous veterans, and I am proud to share a legislative update on my recent efforts.

The 2018-19 State Budget reflects my commitment by including funding for:

- \$50,000 for the Vietnam Veterans of America New York State Council;
- \$125,000 for Veterans of Foreign Wars NYS Chapter Field Service Operations;
- \$500,000 for the NYS Defenders Association Veterans Defense Program; and
- \$3.7 million for the Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Peer-to-Peer Services Program.

I also secured additional state funding to expand the PFC Joseph P. Dwyer Peer-to-Peer Program in Western New York. Administered by WNY Heroes, this program provides peer-to-peer support in addressing PTSD, other mental illness, as well as physical injuries. The expanded program will reach more combat veterans and help them transition from active duty to civilian life.

Earlier this year, I posthumously honored Col. Patrick J. Cunningham by nominating him for induction into the New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame. He was the driving force behind improvements to the visitor experience and boosting attendance at the Buffalo & Erie County Naval & Military Park.

Pat served in the U.S. Army for three decades. His distinguished military career encompassed serving in the Vietnam War, as well as several positions at the Pentagon, including overseeing the Army Budget, assignments at Ft. Bragg, Ft. Bliss, Ft. Leavenworth, and across the globe, from Korea to Worms, Germany and Orleans, France. It was such a privilege to recognize him as one of the newest members of the Veterans' Hall of Fame.

Additionally, the Senate unanimously passed measures to support current and former members of the United States Armed Forces, including legislation to:

- Eliminate first-time and renewal fees for Purple Heart license plates (S4086A);
- Establish a “Gold Star Family” license plate for family members to honor fallen service members (S2539); and
- Allow municipalities the option to waive dog licensing fees for an active member’s dog when they are deployed (S839).

I voted in favor of these three proposals. The bills have been sent to the State Assembly for consideration.

Our veterans have sacrificed so much to serve our nation. Please accept my profound thanks to all of our service men and women, as well as their families. I am humbled to serve as your voice in state government.

As your State Senator, I will continue to support our service men and women. As always, I will be sure to keep you posted on my efforts.