



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

## Mayer, Harckham, Revolutionary War Reenactors Celebrate the Signing of the NYS 250th Commemoration Act

SHELLEY B. MAYER March 17, 2022



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(Verplanck, NY) – Joined by Revolutionary War-era living history reenactors, historians, county and local officials along the Hudson River, New York State Senators Shelley B. Mayer and Pete Harckham today celebrated the signing of the New York State 250th Commemoration Act, which will allow the state to plan for the semiquincentennial commemoration of the American Revolution in 2026.

The legislation ([S.7700](#), A.8689) sponsored by Senator Mayer was signed earlier this year by Governor Kathy Hochul. It creates a 21 voting member commission that includes a wide range of stakeholders and encourages creation of a series of plans to encourage participation in the commemoration. It also creates a

special fund to accept federal and state funding, as well as donations to support programming and heritage projects.

The commemoration is expected to spark local and international tourism interest and will highlight the lesser known stories of women, African Americans and Native Americans who did not immediately benefit from the ideals of liberty and freedom after the revolution.

Since Congress enacted legislation to create the federal commission in 2016, many other states have adopted similar programs. Senator Mayer secured \$50,000 for the commemoration fund in the 2021-22 New York State Budget.

**Senator Mayer said:** “The 250th anniversary offers a unique opportunity to educate and inspire New Yorkers about our state’s leading role in the American Revolution, subsequent civil rights struggles and the state and nation's complex history. As we continue to work towards the ideals of our founding principles and towards a more inclusive and perfect union, I am so pleased we will have the resources in place to honor this history throughout New York. I thank Revolutionary Westchester 250, especially President Constance Kehoe, and advocates throughout New York who have worked to provide communities and non-profits the tools to plan for New York’s Semiquincentennial celebrations in 2026 and beyond. Thank you to my Assembly sponsor Carrie Woerner, colleagues for their support and Governor Kathy Hochul for signing this legislation. We look forward to dynamic planning and implementation of this Commemoration project.”

**Senator Harckham said:** “The role of New York in our nation’s early colonial history is rich and complex. I look forward to contributing to the important celebration of the 250th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution, and thank those here today who are organizing this commemoration.”

The narrow section of the Hudson River at Verplanck’s point served as a strategic location during the Revolutionary War. It is where General George Washington and the Continental Army escaped from the British after the Battle of White Plains in November of 1776, and where General Rochambeau later crossed on his march to victory in Yorktown, Virginia.

**Westchester County Executive George Latimer said:** “Westchester is home to a rich tradition of history-altering events happening here in our backyard. When it comes to the American Revolution, our home County is filled with this important history which my Administration takes very seriously – as seen through our re-building of the historic Elijah Miller House, where General Washington planned the Battle of White Plains, so future generations can hear and learn where it all happened. As we approach this 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, commemorating and celebrating those events is both an educational and an economic opportunity. I thank my friends Senators Mayer and Harckham for recognizing our historically important region.”

**Westchester County Legislator MaryJane Shimsky:** “My colleagues on the Westchester County Board of Legislators and I are very happy that New York State has enacted the 250<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Act. I sponsored, and the Board unanimously passed, this law because we recognized the need for our State to participate in observances of this major landmark in our country’s history. I thank Governor Hochul, the leadership of the State Legislature, and the sponsors of this law for helping New Yorkers to take advantage of the opportunities for travel and tourism that the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary will provide; and, just as important, to help all of us develop a better understanding of, and learn lessons from, our country’s origins.”

**Revolutionary Westchester 250 President Constance Kehoe said:** “Huzzah for the New York State Senators and Assemblymembers and Governor Kathy Hochul. New York State’s full participation in the national commemoration of the founding of the United States is now in place. The importance of New York State cannot be overstated in the founding of our nation. July 9, 2026 will mark 250 years since the members of the Fourth Provincial Congress of New York assembled in White Plains and received then approved the Declaration of Independence. Instructions were sent back to Philadelphia to sign the Declaration. New York’s vote in White Plains made the Declaration of Independence unanimously approved by all thirteen former colonies. The die was cast. The *colony* of New York was declared the *State* of New York on July 11, 1776, in White Plains. I hope to get the chance to personally thank Governor Hochul and all the New York State legislators, whose support will make possible so many high-quality living history events, educational forums, parades, interactive museum exhibits and so much more. A historic tavern tour? Walking the route of British spy, Major John André? Experiencing the reenactment of the Battle of White Plains? This commemoration will surely make memories that will be with us for years to come.”

**Dr. Iris de Roed said:** “I’m very honored to be here today in Westchester County as a visiting scholar from France, to see that the importance of the French American alliance and its crucial role in establishing American independence is officially commemorated here. I’m thrilled to be part of this project in the years to come, and I am hoping to bring new sources from France to contribute to telling the full story of the crucial years of 1780 and 1781.”

**Living History Education Foundation Founder & President Joe Ryan said:** “The people of the State of New York will have fun bringing history alive with the celebration of the 250th.”