

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Senator Webb and the Senate Majority Passes Veteran Protections in Honor of Memorial Day

(BINGHAMTON, NY) Today, Senator Webb and the Senate Democratic Majority advanced legislation to protect the rights and wellbeing of New York's veterans. We are home to the [fifth largest](#) veteran population, with nearly a million former service members residing in the Empire State. Today's measures build on the Democratic Conference's longstanding efforts to uphold and promote the best interests of those who have dedicated themselves to their country by improving the services and protections afforded to them. Although we cannot repay the debt that is owed to the brave men and women of New York, we can always advocate for their dignity and security in retirement.

Today's legislation includes measures that would authorize close friends or family members to fulfill veterans' burial wishes at their behest; require a study from SUNY and CUNY on the availability of campus resources for veterans; notify local veteran agencies and organizations of a member's return to provide expedient support; clarify the definition of "veteran" for tax purposes, and establish the Alex R. Jiménez New York State Military Immigrant Family Legacy Program. While New York State remembers the service members who are no longer with us, we will look to improve the quality of life for those who are still here and their families.

"This weekend, as we celebrate Memorial Day, we honor the memory of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country and our democratic ideals," said **Senator Lea Webb**. "I am proud to advance this package of legislation to ensure that our Veterans and their families have equitable access to benefits, education, and support."

The legislation passed by the Senate Democratic Majority includes:

- **Expanded Authorization for Veterans' Wishes:** This bill, [S5530](#), sponsored by Senator Samra Brouk, authorizes a veteran's close friend or family member who is familiar with that veteran's wishes to request that they be buried in a state veterans' cemetery.
- **Establishing the Alex R. Jiménez Program:** This bill, [S3586](#), sponsored by Senator Nathalia Fernandez, establishes the Alex R. Jiménez New York State Military Immigrant Family Legacy Program.
- **Alternative Tax Exemption for Veterans:** This bill, [S5967](#), sponsored by Senator Pete Harckham, clarifies the definition of veteran to include career members of the armed forces for purposes of the veterans alternative tax exemption.
- **Study on SUNY/CUNY Student-Veteran Services:** This bill, [S5241](#), sponsored by Senator James Sanders, requires the State University of New York and the City University of New York to examine and conduct a study on the availability of campus services, programs and resources for veteran students

- **Timely Issuance of Certificates of Honorable Separation:** This bill, [S5416](#), sponsored by Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton, relates to certificates of honorable separation from or service in the armed forces of the United States, in order to to ensure that local veterans' service agencies are notified upon the return home of service men and women in order to better connect services available to veterans.

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