

First Responders, Volunteers, and Veterans

The Assembly Republican Conference supports the following proposals to provide for those who sacrificed and continue to serve on our behalf:

New York Homes for Heroes Plan –

- **Home Loan Guarantee** – Expands the Federal Home Loan Guarantee to provide a tax credit for National Guard and Reserve veterans equal to the extra .75% active duty veterans receive (**A.6288, Hawley**).
- **Affordable Home Ownership for Disabled Veterans** – Makes the Affordable Home Ownership Development Program available to service-related disabled veterans (**A.5949, Hawley**).
- **Veterans Home, Rehabilitation and Land Ownership Assistance Loans** – Authorizes the State Housing Finance Agency to provide home purchase and rehabilitation assistance loans of up to 20% of the value of the home to veterans (**A.6421, Hawley**).
- **Veterans Assisted Forward Commitment Mortgages** – Authorizes SONYMA to purchase veterans assisted forward commitment loans from banks with low down payments and at favorable interest rates (**A.2233, Hawley**).

Veteran Nursing Home Study – Directs the Department of Health to conduct a study on opening three new veterans' nursing homes in New York State (**A.3596, Ashby**).

Wage Tax Credit for Hiring Veterans and Emergency Services Personnel – Creates a wage tax credit for employers who employ New York National Guard men and women, reservists, volunteer firefighters, and EMS personnel (**A.3681, Hawley**).

Free State Park Access for Injured or Disabled Veterans – Allows veterans with a service-connected disability or Purple Heart free use of parks and campsites; provides that such disability shall be 10 percent service-connected or greater (**A.3584, Ashby**).

Military Pay Income Tax Exemption Extension – Extends the State Personal Income Tax exemption that is currently for active duty troops stationed overseas to include New York residents stationed within the U.S. (**A.5070, Hawley**).

College Tuition for Family Members of Fallen Military Personnel – Allows the surviving dependent family members of New York State military personnel who have died while on active duty to receive free tuition, room, and board at SUNY or CUNY institutions (**A.3549, Hawley**).

Veteran Housing Discrimination – Adds those who hold a veteran status to the protected classes in order to defend against unlawful housing discrimination (**A.3561, Ashby**).

No Surrender Veteran Initiative

Independent Veterans Services Agency – Directs the Division of Veterans' Services to conduct a study on converting the Division of Veterans' Services to an administrative agency independent of the executive department (**A.3725, Ashby**).

Office of Mental Health Study Related to Therapeutic PTSD Techniques – Requires the office of mental health to conduct a study on utilizing the therapeutic techniques studied by the research and recognition project for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder (**A.8377, Giglio, JM**).

Peer-to-Peer Mental Health Support Program – Establishes a peer-to-peer mental-health support program modeled after the successful Joseph P. Dwyer Program for frontline healthcare workers; provides confidential, peer-to-peer assistance for individuals struggling with depression, anxiety, or PTSD (**A.3501, Ashby**).

PTSD Line of Duty Sick Leave – Allows first responders who are diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder to request line of duty sick leave (**A.4646, Ashby**).

Green Alert System For Missing Military Members – Establishes a statewide green alert system for missing military members who have elected to join the system and who suffer from a mental illness, including post-traumatic stress disorder or a traumatic brain injury (**A.3585, Ashby**).

"New York's Own Combat Veterans Health Care Choice Program Act" – Establishes tax-free savings accounts to pay the healthcare costs of certain combat veterans until covered by the federal government (**A.4999, Ashby**).

New York State Volunteer Fire Protection Emergency Reimbursement Account – Diverts monies collected from the Public Safety Communications Surcharge into a newly created New York State Volunteer Fire Protection Reimbursement Account to be used to reimburse volunteer departments and emergency medical services for expenses incurred related to procuring personal protective equipment (PPE). Monies collected and deposited into the account may be used to reimburse volunteer fire departments and emergency medical services for lost revenue due to either municipal budget cuts or the cancellation of public events such as fundraisers or charity events (**A.3783, Norris**).

Behavioral Health Website – Requires the Office of Mental Health, Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, and the Department of Education to create a behavioral health website which shall provide information on various behavioral health issues such as depression, eating disorders, anxiety, schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder, and bipolar disorder (**A.5103, Reilly**).

Leave of Absence for Military Spouses – Expands leave of absence for military spouses by removing the requirement that leave be used when a person's spouse is on leave while deployed to a combat theater or combat zone of operation (**A.3506, Hawley**).

Omnibus Emergency Services Volunteer Incentive Act – Provides a \$400 tax credit to volunteer firefighters and ambulance workers, exempts registration and use taxes for vehicles used in the performance of duty, creates a loan forgiveness program, and provides some other benefits (**A.5793, Palmesano**).

Veterans' Clearinghouse – Creates a veterans' clearinghouse for purposes of identifying veterans eligible for benefits (**A.4846, Miller, B**).

Veterans' Organization Capital Costs – Relates to capital costs of construction, improvement, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of facilities owned by veterans' organizations; allows for state grants to be used for VFWs, American Legion Posts, etc. (**A.7483, Ra**).