



# **MAIL CALL**

## **CHAIRMAN STEVE STERN**

### **COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

Issue 002

5 May 2025/Vol. 001

## **A Message From Our Chairman**

It has been my privilege to work closely with and for the brave men and women who have sacrificed so much to protect our great nation. I look forward to meeting with our veterans from across New York State, and as Chairman I remain committed to ensuring that our veterans across New York State always receive the recognition, support, and services that they deserve.



## **Contact Chairman Stern**

**95 Broad Hollow Road, Suite 100,  
Melville, NY 11747  
631-271-8025  
[sterns@nyassembly.gov](mailto:sterns@nyassembly.gov)**

**Legislative Office Bldg. Room 841  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5732  
<https://nyassembly.gov/comm/?id=40>**



*Assemblyman Steve Stern with the Vietnam Veterans of America and Director of the Suffolk County Veterans Services Agency, Marcelle Leis*

# Important Information from Chairman Stern

<b>Veterans Crisis Hotline</b>	988, Press 1
<b>NYS Veterans Benefits Advisor</b>	1-888-838-7697
<b>VA Health Benefits Hotline</b>	877-222-VETS
<b>PACT Act Assistance</b>	800-698-2411
<b>VA Healthcare-Related Fraud, VHA Office of Integrity and Compliance Helpline</b>	1-866-842-4357
<b>VA Benefits Fraud Helpline</b>	1-800-827-1000
<b>Support for VGLI program, SGLI program, and FSGLI Claims</b>	800-419-1473
<b>Support for VA-Life, S-DVI, and VMLI</b>	800-669-8477
<b>Assistance with Education Benefits</b>	888-442-4551
<b>Caregiver Support Line</b>	1-855-260-3274
<b>VA Loan Guaranty Service</b>	877-827-3702
<b>Special Issue Hotline – Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, Gulf War, Agent Orange, and other information</b>	800-749-8387
<b>National Call Center for Homeless Veterans</b>	877-424-3838
<b>MISSION Act</b>	800-698-2411
<b>Spina Bifida Health Care Benefits Program</b>	833-930-0816
<b>Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, CHAMPVA</b>	800-733-8387
<b>Women Veterans Helpline</b>	855-829-6636
<b>Debt Management Center</b>	800-827-0648
<b>National Pension Call Center</b>	877-294-6380
<b>Health Resource Center (collection of medical and prescription debts)</b>	866-400-1238

# Important Information from Chairman Stern

**Schedule an online consultation with a NYS Veterans Services Agency Benefits Advisor:**

<https://veterans.ny.gov>

**Find your local NYS Veterans Services Office:** <https://veterans.ny.gov/office-locations>

**Find your local NYS Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialists:**

<https://dol.ny.gov/services-veterans>

**Property Tax Exemptions for Veterans:**

<https://veterans.ny.gov/property-tax-exemptions-veterans>

**Health and Disability Benefits for Families and Caregivers:**

<https://www.va.gov/family-and-caregiver-benefits/health-and-disability/>

**Apply for a Veterans Status Designation on a NYS Photo ID:**

<https://dmv.ny.gov/more-info/veteran-status-designation-on-a-photo-document>

**Homes for Veterans Program:** <https://veterans.ny.gov/homes-veterans-program>

**Gold Star Annuity Program:** <https://veterans.ny.gov/gold-star-parent-annuity-program>

**New York State Blind Annuity Program:** <https://veterans.ny.gov/new-york-state-blind-annuity-program>

**Benefits for Certain Children of Vietnam War Veterans who served in areas where Agent Orange and other chemicals were used:** <https://veterans.ny.gov/benefits-certain-children-vietnam-war-veterans>

**New York State Veterans' Nursing Homes:** <https://veterans.ny.gov/new-york-state-veterans-nursing-homes>



# Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support Project

Founded in memory of Private First Class Joseph P. Dwyer, a combat medic in Iraq who struggled with PTSD, their mission is to advocate for safe, non-clinical environments where veterans can connect, share their experiences, and find healing through the support of their peers. This peer-driven approach helps veterans and their families navigate the challenges of civilian life, from mental health struggles to reintegration into their communities.



Connect with a Joseph P. Dwyer Peer Support Project near you  
<https://www.josephpdwyerpeerproject.org/dwyer-counties>



Every second Thursday of the month at 11:00AM, the Suffolk County Joseph P. Dwyer Project - Family Support and Education Series hosts a virtual presentation for veterans and families, featuring a new topic every session.

Join here:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86829194414#success>

Meeting ID: 868 2919 4414

## SUNY Campus Military-Connected Services

### **Prospective Students:**

*Susan Dewan, Assistant Director for  
Military and Veteran Recruitment*

518-445-4069

[susan.dewan@suny.edu](mailto:susan.dewan@suny.edu)

### **Current Students**

*Diana Pasterchick, SUNY Coordinator  
of Veteran and Military Affairs*

[diana.pasterchick@suny.edu](mailto:diana.pasterchick@suny.edu)

### **Find Your Local Campus Military-Connected Services Office Here**

[https://www.suny.edu/attend/get-started/military-and-veteran-students/  
campus-veterans-services-offices/](https://www.suny.edu/attend/get-started/military-and-veteran-students/campus-veterans-services-offices/)





*News from*

Assemblymember  
**Steve Stern**

Assembly District 10



## ***Assemblyman Stern Announces the Veterans' Nonprofit Capital Program Application Period is Open***

*Eligible organizations serving Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families may submit applications April 21, 2025 through May 30, 2025*

Assemblyman Steve Stern, Chairman of the NYS Assembly Veterans' Affairs Committee, is proud to announce that at least \$1.35 million is available through the third round of the **Veterans' Nonprofit Capital Program, distributed by the New York State Department of Veterans' Services and the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY)**, to support efforts to expand and enhance quality services available to the state's Veterans, Service Members and Military Families.

The Veterans' Nonprofit Capital Grant Program provides support for the indispensable organizations and institutions dedicated to serving our Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families. The program ensures that these vital entities have the resources necessary to sustain their impactful work.

Grant funds through the Veterans' Nonprofit Capital Program (VNCP) will enable eligible nonprofit veterans' organizations to make capital improvements to facilities that serve Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families. ***Applications can be submitted from April 21-May 30, 2025.***

To qualify for this funding, at least 75 percent of the organization's current members must be veterans or service members of the United States Military, with military family members comprising the majority of all remaining members. The organization must verify to the State that their principal purpose is to provide services and resources to veterans, service members and military families. The RGA is posted on the DVS and DASNY websites. A webinar outlining the process for applicants [may be viewed here, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ba\\_cuVo\\_f4o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ba_cuVo_f4o).

All applicants must be prequalified in the Statewide Financial System (SFS) at the time of application. A webinar explaining the prequalification process may be viewed here, <https://meetny-gov.webex.com/recording/service/sites/meetny-gov/recording/1ec9f06493be103dbdeb6ef1d9b6cd20/playback>.

Funding through the Veterans' Nonprofit Capital Program is provided for architecture, design, engineering, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation or expansion of an eligible facility, and purchase of eligible furnishings or equipment.

General Inquiries must be directed to the VNCP Coordinator at, [vncp@dasny.org](mailto:vncp@dasny.org). For the application, more information on the types of eligible projects, frequently asked questions, and other important information, please see our Assembly page, <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Steve-Stern/story/113753>. For further questions, please contact our office by phone 631-271-8025, or email at [sterns@nyassembly.gov](mailto:sterns@nyassembly.gov).



*News from*

Assemblymember  
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Assembly District 10



## ***Assemblyman Steve Stern Applauds Funding to Support Suicide Prevention Efforts for Veterans and Uniformed Personnel***

*CARES UP Provides \$60,000 Grants to Veterans' Organizations, First-Responder and Corrections Agencies To Implement Trauma and Mental Wellness Training*

18 grants have been awarded in New York State to expand resiliency and suicide prevention efforts among military veterans and uniformed personnel, including law enforcement, firefighters, emergency medical service personnel, correction officers and emergency dispatchers. Administered through the New York Office of Mental Health's Suicide Prevention Center of New York, the CARES UP initiative will provide \$60,000 over two years to four law enforcement agencies; three fire departments; three EMS services; three emergency communications organizations; two corrections agencies and three organizations serving veterans.

In addition, the Office of Mental Health (OMH) also provided awards of \$40,000 over two years to 11 organizations previously funded through CARES UP to sustain their mental health and wellness initiatives.

The CARES UP program provides organizations with \$30,000 annually to increase suicide prevention efforts and wellness programming in their agencies. First responder agencies work closely with the Suicide Prevention Center to receive training from national subject matter experts on topics such as resiliency, mental health and wellness, suicide prevention and peer support and implement agency-specific actions to address their unique needs.

The initiative also provides these grants to support veterans' organizations via Onward Ops, <https://onwardops.org/>. Recipient organizations use the funding to promote social welfare of service members transitioning back to their communities after their tour of duty ends.

**Assemblymember Steve Stern said,** "As the Chairman of the New York State Assembly Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I applaud the announcement that our local heroes, who serve all of us, will have access to the services they need and deserve. Far too many of our soldiers, veterans, first responders and law enforcement professionals have struggled with mental health challenges and take their own lives. That is absolutely unacceptable, and these grants to improve resiliency, wellness, support and suicide prevention will be an important part of saving lives."



# **2025 CARES UP Recipients Include:**

## **Capital Region:**

Albany County Corrections\*  
Albany City Police Department\*  
Albany County Sheriff's Office  
Clifton Park & Half Moon Emergency Corps\*  
Colonie EMS\*  
Veterans and Community Housing Coalition  
Watervliet Fire Department\*

## **Central New York:**

Eastern Paramedics Inc.  
Onondaga County Department of Communication Services

## **Mid-Hudson:**

Clarkstown Police Department\*  
Village of Mamaroneck Police Department\*  
New Windsor Police Department  
Pleasant Valley Fire District  
Port Chester Police Department\*  
Orange County Emergency Services Emergency Communications  
Orange County Emergency Services – Police Services Division  
Orange County Emergency Services – Fire Services Division  
City of Rye Fire Department

## **Long Island:**

Nassau County Sheriff's Department  
Sayville American Legion Post 651  
Suffolk County Police Department  
Suffolk County Sheriff's Department\*

## **Mohawk Valley:**

Utica Center for Development Inc.  
North Country:  
St. Lawrence County Correctional Facility  
Southern Tier:  
Village of Liberty Police Department  
Sullivan County Division of Public Safety

## **Western New York:**

Allegany County Sheriff's Department\*  
City of Olean Fire Department\*  
Town of West Seneca Police Department

\* Denotes organizations receiving sustainability funding from the Office of Mental Health.

# ***Assemblyman Stern Joins VA Employees, Elected Officials, and Union Leaders to Stand Against Proposed Federal Cuts to U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs***



**New York, NY–** Assemblyman Steve Stern, Chairman of the NYS Assembly Veterans' Affairs Committee, joined Assembly Member Harvey Epstein, Senator Chuck Schumer, Congressman Jerry Nadler, and Senator Kristen Gonzalez at a rally outside of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Margaret Cochran Corbin Campus in New York on Sunday, April 27, 2025, condemning the federal government's proposal to terminate 80,000 VA employees. Legislators, VA employees, and union leaders gathered to denounce these reprehensible cuts and to stand in support of our veterans and our federal employees who serve them, many of them veterans themselves.



"As the Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee of the New York State Assembly, I am proud to stand with our veterans and their families to strongly and vehemently denounce the Trump administration's shameful and devastating cuts to VA staffing and critical services that serve the brave men and women who have sacrificed so much to protect our great nation," **Assemblyman Steve Stern said.** "These cuts delay critical medical care, slash mental health services, including suicide prevention, and cut assistance for housing. Too many of our veterans suffer in silence. We owe them and their families the support they deserve and have earned. This is our solemn duty. The Trump administration and our elected representatives in Washington must fully restore these essential resources now. These cuts to the VA are heartbreaking and disturbing, and across New York State and the nation, it is not only an unacceptable betrayal- it is un-American."



**Northport, NY** – Assemblyman Steve Stern joined VA employees, local unions, and our veterans on March 14, 2025 at the Northport VA Medical Center to stand in unity against the proposed federal cuts to the VA workforce and funding, to defend services and quality of care for our local heroes.







# *Honoring* the VFW Department of NY and American Legion



Assemblyman Steve Stern and Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton, Chair of the Veterans, Homeland Security, and Military Affairs Committee welcomed the VFW Department of NY to the Capitol for their 2025 Legislative Breakfast, and to celebrate their important work and proven history of providing vital assistance and support to our country's heroes.



Assemblyman Stern joined the Suffolk County American Legion and Suffolk County Commander Kevin Eaton to celebrate the 106<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Legion, recognizing over a century of excellence in serving our veterans.





# WEST POINT DAY

at the NYS Capitol

*April 9, 2025*



Assemblyman Stern welcomed some of our very best of the class of Cadets of the U.S. Military Academy to the NYS Capitol, with West Point Chief of Staff Colonel Khanh Diep. We thank them for their service to our great nation and wish all of the Cadets every success in their bright futures ahead.

Assemblyman Steve Stern had the pleasure of meeting with First Captain of the U.S. Military Academy's Corps of Cadets, Caroline Robinson. First Captain Robinson serves in the highest position in the Cadet chain of command, and she is responsible for over 4,400 Corps of Cadets. Upon her graduation from West Point, she will be commissioned as a Field Artillery Officer and post to Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. She brings great pride to her family, West Point, and to the Great State of New York.







# NEW YORK STATE IRAQ WAR COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL

**The New York State Iraq War Commemorative Medal was created to honor New York State Service Members who served during the Iraq War, in the timeframe of 10 March 2003 – 31 December 2021.**

## **Eligibility**

Service Member who served in Iraq between 20 March 2003 and 31 December 2021.

**Please see <https://dmna.ny.gov/awards/apply/iraq/> for further information, and to apply**

The New York State Iraq War Commemorative Medal does not provide the holder with any monetary benefits or disability compensation. It is simply an expression of support and appreciation from the New York State Legislature and the people of New York to veterans for their honorable military service.



# NEW YORK STATE AFGHANISTAN WAR COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL

**The New York State Afghanistan War Commemorative Medal was created to honor New York State Service Members who served during the Afghanistan War, in the timeframe of 07 October 2001 – 30 August 2021.**

## **Eligibility**

Service Member who served in Afghanistan between 07 October 2001 and 30 August 2021.

**Please see <https://dmna.ny.gov/awards/apply/afghanistan/> for further information, and to apply**

The New York State Afghanistan War Commemorative Medal does not provide the holder with any monetary benefits or disability compensation. It is simply an expression of support and appreciation from the New York State Legislature and the people of New York to veterans for their honorable military service.



# NEW YORK STATE VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL



**The New York State Vietnam War Commemorative Medal was created to honor New York State Service Members who served during the Vietnam War, in the timeframe of 01 November 1955 – 17 May 1975.**

## **Eligibility**

Service Member who served in one of the following locations between 01 November 1955 and 17 May 1975:

Vietnam

Thailand

Laos

Cambodia

its contiguous waters

Vietnam airspace

**Please see <https://dmna.ny.gov/awards/apply/vietnam/> for further information, and to apply**

The New York State Vietnam War Commemorative Medal does not provide the holder with any monetary benefits or disability compensation. It is simply an expression of support and appreciation from the New York State Legislature and the people of New York to veterans for their honorable military service.

# NEW YORK STATE KOREAN WAR COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL



**The New York State Korean War Commemorative Medal was created to honor New York State Service Members who served during the Korean War, in the timeframe of 27 June 1950 – 31 January 1955.**

## **Eligibility**

Service Member who served in one of the following locations between 27 June 1950 and 31 January 1955:

Korean Peninsula

its contiguous waters

Korean airspace

**Please see <https://dmna.ny.gov/awards/apply/korea/> for further information, and to apply**

The New York State Korean War Commemorative Medal does not provide the holder with any monetary benefits or disability compensation. It is simply an expression of support and appreciation from the New York State Legislature and the people of New York to veterans for their honorable military service.



# Veterans' Affairs Committee Updates

## 10 Bills That Have Passed the Veterans' Affairs Committee Year to Date, 2025:

### **A06264, STERN**

Establishes members of the commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the United States Public Health Services (USPHS) as veterans under NYS law consistent with federal law.

**PASSED NYS ASSEMBLY, 4/2/2025**

### **A06579, STERN**

Tax relief for the men and women who serve our nation – this legislation provides a property tax exemption for active service members whose military duty station is within the boundaries of New York State and has served in a combat zone anytime during the taxable year.

### **A2058, CUNNINGHAM**

Requires the Women Veterans Coordinator of the Department of Veterans' Services to develop and implement a maternity care program for pregnant and postpartum veterans.

**SIGNED INTO LAW 2/14/2025**

### **A2435, CRUZ**

Regarding the definition of "intended recipients" of the Alex R. Jimenez New York Military Immigrant Family Program to specifically include spouses, parents, and children of a uniformed service member, veteran, or reserve component member as well as the next-of-kin of such service members and veterans requesting a grant of posthumous U.S. citizenship on their behalf.

**SIGNED INTO LAW 2/14/2025**

### ***A04751A, RAJKUMAR***

Ensures that New York State and local veterans' service agencies include disabled veterans in employment assistance obligations.

**PASSED ASSEMBLY 3/4/2025**

### ***A06538, SCHIAVONI***

This bill provides that the previous Division of Veterans' Services will now be known as the Department of Veterans Services, a Cabinet-level NYS agency, consistently throughout state law.

**PASSED ASSEMBLY 4/8/2025**

### ***A291A, BARRETT***

This bill ensures that the nation's newest service branch members, the Space Force, are included in the definition of veterans and uniformed services under New York State law.

### ***A4649A, RAJKUMAR***

Provides that certificates of honorable separation from or service in the armed forces of the United States will be forwarded to the appropriate local veterans' service agency within 60 days of receipt.

### ***A8087, STERN***

This bill authorizes the presentation of a New York State Cold War Commemorative Medal for active duty during the period of September 2, 1945 through December 26, 1991

### ***A8089, DAIS***

Establishes a New York State veterans' and service member law book of a compilation of all state statutes governing the rights, privileges, benefits and services afforded to veterans, service members and their families.