



MAIL CALL

CHAIRMAN STEVE STERN

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Issue 001

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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 in New York State always receive the recognition, support, and services that they deserve.



Contact Chairman Stern

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<https://nyassembly.gov/comm/?id=40>



Chairman Stern recognizing the 2025 Women of Distinction, honored for their outstanding service to veterans in the 10th Assembly District, including Carol Rocco, the Town of Huntington's Coordinator of Veterans' Affairs, Ginger Hoernig from St. Hugh of Lincoln Church, Donna Boyle of Greenlawn American Legion Post 1244, and Jenny Duclay of SailAhead.

Important Information from Chairman Stern

NYS Department of Veterans' Services	518-474-6114
Veterans Crisis Hotline	988, Press 1
VA Health Benefits Hotline	877-222-VETS
PACT Act Assistance	800-698-2411
VA Healthcare-Related Fraud, VHA Office of Integrity and Compliance Helpline	1-866-842-4357
VA Benefits Fraud Helpline	1-800-827-1000
Support for VGLI Program, SGLI Program, and FSGLI Claims	800-419-1473
Support for VA-Life, S-DVI, and VMLI	800-669-8477
Assistance with Education Benefits	888-442-4551
Caregiver Support Line	1-855-260-3274
VA Loan Guaranty Service	877-827-3702
Special Issue Hotline – Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, Gulf War, Agent Orange, and other information	800-749-8387
National Call Center for Homeless Veterans	877-424-3838
MISSION Act	800-698-2411
Spina Bifida Health Care Benefits Program	833-930-0816
Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, CHAMPVA	800-733-8387
Women Veterans Helpline	855-829-6636
Debt Management Center	800-827-0648
National Pension Call Center	877-294-6380
Health Resource Center (collection of medical and prescription debts)	866-400-1238
Paralyzed Veterans of America	212-807-3114
Veteran Text Crisis Line	text 838255
Connect with a fellow combat Veteran about your experiences, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:	1-877-927-8387; TTY:711

Important Information from Chairman Stern

VA Health Chat: This app allows veterans to chat with VA staff when they have a question about a non-life-threatening health issue, want to schedule a VA appointment or refill a VA prescription, and more: <https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-chat>

VA Health and Benefits: Download the VA Health and Benefits mobile app to manage VA health care, benefits and payments from a mobile phone or tablet: <https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-and-benefits>

VA Video Connect: An app to help Veterans and their caregivers quickly and easily meet with VA health care providers through live video on any computer or mobile device with an internet connection: <https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect>

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>

Find Your Local Vet Center: <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>

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.



New York State's Joseph P. Dwyer Veteran Peer Support Programs

Connection. Community. Support.

**Explore Support Programs for
Veterans, Families & Caregivers**

Visit: www.JosephPDwyerPeerProject.org

This is the official website for all Dwyer Programs in New York State.

✧ What You'll Find on the Site:

- ✓ An interactive map of every Dwyer Program by county
- ✓ Upcoming events, meetups, and Veteran activities
- ✓ Peer support info for Veterans, families, and caregivers
- ✓ Resources for mental health, benefits, and reintegration
- ✓ Contact details to reach local program coordinators

👤 Who Is It For?

- ✓ Veterans from all service branches
- ✓ Active Duty, National Guard & Reservists
- ✓ Family members and caregivers



Website *powered by*



Scan the QR code or visit:
www.JosephPDwyerPeerProject.org



NYS Benefits for Our Veterans with Disabilities

New York State Motor Vehicle Registration Fee Exemption

Through the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), Veterans with disabilities can qualify to be exempt from registration fees and vehicle plate fees.

To determine if you are eligible, visit:

<https://veterans.ny.gov/new-york-state-motor-vehicle-registration-fee-exemption>

For more information and how to apply, visit:

<https://dmv.ny.gov/more-info/information-for-military-and-veterans>

NYS Blind Annuity Program

The Blind Annuity Program benefit is for legally blind wartime Veterans, or surviving un-remarried spouses of legally blind wartime Veterans, who live and are domiciled in New York State. Blindness need not be a service-connected disability.

If a Veteran met all the criteria for the Blind Annuity benefit, but never actually received the benefit during their lifetime, the un-remarried surviving spouse of that Veteran may still be eligible to receive the benefit.

For more information and how to apply, visit:

<https://veterans.ny.gov/new-york-state-blind-annuity-program>

E-ZPass for Disabled Veterans

The New York State Thruway Authority offers free, unlimited travel anywhere on the Thruway to certain qualifying disabled Veterans. The Thruway Authority's only qualifying criteria for the Disabled Veterans E-ZPass Non-Revenue program is a fee-exempt vehicle registration from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

For more information and how to apply, visit:

<https://www.thruway.ny.gov/ezpass/veterans.html>

Reduced Fee New York State Hunting and Fishing Licenses for Disabled Veterans

Disabled veterans can get reduced fee hunting and fishing licenses and preference for Deer Management Permits from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

For more information about reduced fee licenses and permit preference, contact your DEC Regional Office, <https://dec.ny.gov/regulatory/permits-licenses/sporting-and-use/sporting/free-reduced-fee#Active>, **or the Deer Management Permit Information Hotline: 1-866-472-4332.**



Assemblyman Steve Stern joins Canine Companions to honor and recognize the graduates of the Veterans' Class and their service dogs.

NYS Department of Veterans' Services ***Healing Haven for Military Spouses***

The Department of Veterans' Services has launched its initiative "Healing Haven for Military Spouses," creating a safe, peer-to-peer, supportive environment for the spouses of Service Members and Veterans to come together, share openly, and take part in guided sessions focused on stress relief, positive mental health, and meaningful self-care.

Participation is entirely free, and the group will meet virtually on Zoom the 1st and 3rd Monday of every month.

To register, please visit the below link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/2F2lsRRhSKKGR-Ewofkz7RQ#/registration>

7PM ZOOM MEETING SCHEDULE

1st Mon every Month

**Stress Relief for
Military Spouses**

3rd Mon every Month

**Self-Care Tools for
Military Families**

QUARTERLY IN-PERSON RETREATS

Schedule coming soon.



STRESS IS GONE



**Department of
Veterans' Services**

At United Veterans Beacon House we are committed to providing personalized, supportive care for our veteran clients.

United Veterans Beacon House is a 501(c)(3) non-profit headquartered in Bay Shore, New York. Each year our dedicated staff helps more than 1,250 veterans, through our housing program and community-based supportive programs.

Programs and Services:

- Emergency & transitional housing assists single males & single females.
- Permanent housing serves single males and veterans with families.
- Permanent housing for persons living with HIV/AIDS through the HOPWA program.
- Assistance with service & non-service connected benefits
- Nutritional assistance
- Pro bono legal services
- Transportation
- Job readiness & search
- Rental & utility arrears assistance
- Thrift shop
- Holiday meals & gift assistance
- Referrals to health care services

To learn if you're eligible, please call UVBH HQ at **631.665.1571** or scan this QR code.



CONTACT US:

631.665.1571 ● info@uvbh.com ● www.uvbh.org
1715 Union Blvd., Bay Shore, NY 11706

Veterans Peer Support Project

**Third Monday of Each Month
12 PM–2 PM**

Half Hollow Hills Community Library

55 Vanderbilt Parkway, Dix Hills, NY 11746

hhlhlibrary.org | 631-421-4530

Stop by and speak with a peer mentor to learn about free programs and services for Long Island Veterans of all eras. Light refreshments will be available. No registration required. Open to all.



Joseph P. Dwyer Project

LEGAL SERVICES

**Legal Services
of Long Island**

Long Island
State Veterans Home
AT STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

**Long Island State
Veterans Home**



**Suffolk County Veterans
Services Agency**



**Long Island Cares
Inc. The Harry
Chapin Food Bank**



**United Veterans
Beacon House**



Veterans' Affairs Committee Updates

Bills Signed into Law as of 1-14-26

A6579, 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.

SIGNED INTO LAW 12/19/2025

A8485, STERN

Requires the Department of Veterans' Services to provide information on the department's website on volunteer opportunities available to veterans and to post relevant application forms that a qualified veteran can use to apply for volunteer opportunities.

SIGNED INTO LAW 12/19/2025

A6264, STERN

Expands the definition of a veteran to include members of the commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service

SIGNED INTO LAW 12/5/2025

A8476, STERN

This bill enacts the Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding (GUARD) VA benefits act to increase penalties on individuals and entities who act in violation of federal and state law related to preparing, presenting or prosecuting claims for veterans benefits including soliciting or receiving compensation in connection with a claim for VA benefits without being properly accredited by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

SIGNED INTO LAW 11/5/25



A291, BARRETT

Extends State benefits to service members and veterans of the Space Force

SIGNED INTO LAW 12/5/2025

A8475, BERGER

Makes technical corrections to the title of the Commissioner of Veteran's Services

SIGNED INTO LAW 11/21/25

A4751A, RAJKUMAR

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

SIGNED INTO LAW 11/5/25

A29, McDONALD

Designates New York State a Purple Heart state, honoring our combat veterans for their service and sacrifice.

SIGNED INTO LAW 11/5/25

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



To view our digital newsletter, with all embedded links, please scan the QR code below:

