



MAIL CALL

CHAIRMAN STEVE STERN

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Issue 007

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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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Melville, NY 11747
631-271-8025
sterns@nyassembly.gov

Legislative Office Bldg. Room 841
Albany, NY 12248
518-455-5732

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



Assemblyman Steve Stern joined the Boys and Girls State Citizens from Greenlawn American Legion Post 1244 to deliver funding to ensure that students can continue to participate in these historic programs.

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
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
NYS Veterans App and Other Helpful NYS Mobile Apps:	
https://www.ny.gov/mobileapps	

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/>

Lifetime Liberty Pass: <https://veterans.ny.gov/lifetime-liberty-pass>

Non-Service-Connected Pension: <https://veterans.ny.gov/non-service-connected-pension>

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



VETERANS LEGAL RESOURCE FAIR

Hosted by Legal Services of Long Island
In Partnership with Assemblyman Steve Stern,
Chairman of the NYS Assembly Veterans' Affairs Committee

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30TH, 2026

11:00AM - 2:00PM

**SOUTH HUNTINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
145 PIDGEON HILL ROAD
HUNTINGTON STATION, NY 11746**

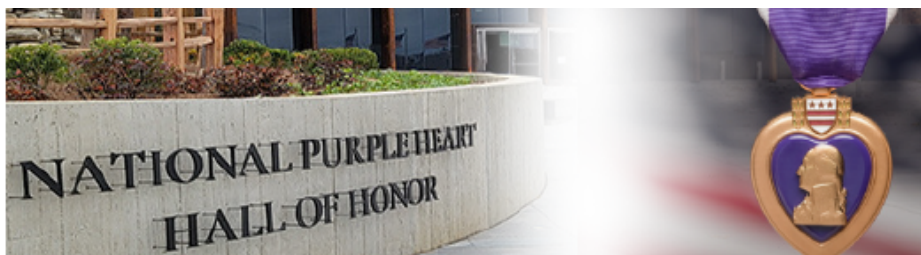
The Veterans Legal Resource Fair will feature:

- Presentations on legal issues affecting veterans
 - Learn about available legal resources and services
 - Meet with veteran-serving agencies
-



LEGAL SERVICES
OF LONG ISLAND





National Purple Heart Hall of Honor Roll of Honor

Nearly two million Americans have been awarded the Purple Heart. Unfortunately, there is no publicly available master database of all those who have been wounded or killed in action while protecting our nation and the freedoms we cherish. To help ensure all of our Purple Heart heroes are memorialized for generations to come, the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor and National Purple Heart Honor Mission are building the Roll of Honor, the nation's foremost repository of Purple Heart recipients and their stories.

Inclusion in the Roll of Honor is open to all Purple Heart recipients, regardless of branch or time of service. Family members can also create profiles for their loved ones. To be enrolled, simply completes the registration form, <https://www.purpleheartmission.org/register-for-the-roll-of-honor>, including providing the relevant award documentation (DD-214 or DD-215, Purple Heart Certificate, General or Permanent Orders listing the Award, or a WD-AGO 53-550). Applicants to the roll are also encouraged to provide a photo to be associated with their profile.

To share your story or a loved one's, and to register for the Roll of Honor, please visit the site below:

<https://www.purpleheartmission.org/register-for-the-roll-of-honor>

If you need assistance or would like a paper copy of the application, please email Info@PurpleHeartMission.org



Department of Veterans' Services



DVS CHAT & CHEW: HAIR LOSS: NOW WHAT?

UNDERSTANDING YOUR OPTIONS &
FINDING SUPPORT FOR
MEN AND WOMEN.

WITH
BIANCA LYDER

CERTIFIED HAIR LOSS SPECIALIST | 30+ YEARS OF EXPERIENCE



★ **JOIN US!** ★

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2026

12 NOON - 2 PM

REGISTER:

<https://meetny-gov.webex.com/webex/register/r40216621c65bab82bb5cb08cdf11ba54>

ABOUT BIANCA LYDER

Bianca Lyder is a Certified Hair Loss Specialist with over 30 years of experience helping men, women, and children experiencing hair thinning and hair loss. She has done strong work with both male and female veterans.

She is the owner of New Horizons Hair by Bianca Hair Restoration and Salon.

Bianca is a humanitarian, educator, and advocate who partners with the American Cancer Society's "Look Good, Feel Better Program" and has worked with the VA to provide solutions including medical wigs and men's units / hair replacement options for veterans. She is proud to be the FIRST Hair Loss Specialist approved as a vendor with the VA hospital from her borough.

Bianca is the widow of a veteran and is proud to serve those who have served.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Causes of Hair Loss
- ✓ Quality of Life: Living with Hair Loss
- ✓ Hair Loss in Men: Male Pattern Baldness
- ✓ Hair Solutions for Men & Women
- ✓ Traditional Wigs vs. Men's Units
- ✓ Eligibility Criteria for Veterans
- ✓ Accessing Your Benefits
- ✓ Cost of Hair Unit or Wig to Veterans: \$0.00
- ✓ And so much more!

MODERATED BY

DR. LESSIE BRANCH

DVS, SPECIAL ASSISTANT
FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



FREE MEDICAL WIGS & MEN'S UNITS FOR THOSE IN NEED

Bianca offers free medical wigs and men's units / hair replacement options to qualified veterans experiencing hair loss due to stress, PTSD, depression, alopecia, chemo, etc.

FOR A COMPLIMENTARY CONSULTATION

Lyder Enterprises, Inc.
124 West 24 Street, Ste 24
New York, NY 10011

📞 917 209 5099
212 759 4247
📠 Fax: 212 491 2622
🌐 www.newhorizonshairbybianca.com

VETERANS.NY.GOV



Veterans Project

Food Collection Bin

Giving Back to Our Veterans

Returning soldiers and their families face unique challenges transitioning from the front lines to civilian life. Help veterans in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. All donations are greatly appreciated.

EXAMPLES OF OUR MOST NEEDED ITEMS
Listed below are examples of the most requested items, however we accept ALL non-perishable items. Together, we can help Long Islanders facing hunger.

BREAKFAST Cereal Oatmeal	BOXED/BAGGED GRAINS Pasta Rice (Brown/White)	CANNED FRUITS Low Sugar Items No Sugar Added
CANNED MEALS Soups Pasta Meats Stews	CANNED PROTEINS Chicken Fish (Tuna, Salmon, etc.) Beans	CANNED VEGETABLES Low Sodium Items No Salt Added
COOKING & PANTRY Condiments/Spices Olive Oil Sauces	DAIRY Shelf Stable Milk Canned (Evaporated) Dry Milk	TOILETRIES Toilet Paper Tissues Paper Towels
BABY SUPPLIES Formula Baby Food/Snacks Diapers	PANTRY STAPLES Peanut Butter Jelly/Jams Jellies (100% Fruit)	IMPORTANT INFORMATION - Let's promote healthy eating! Choose foods that are low in sugar/sodium and free of high fructose corn syrup. - Only boxes, cans, or plastic. - NO GLASS. 631.582.3463 www.li-cares.org



In collaboration with Assemblyman Steve Stern, Chairman of the NYS Assembly Veterans' Affairs Committee and Half Hollow Hills Community Library.



Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Act

The Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Act, signed into law on May 12, 2014, allows eligible Veteran business owners to become certified as a New York State Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business (SDVOB). The goal of the Act is to encourage and support eligible SDVOBs to play a greater role in the state's economy by increasing their participation in New York State's contracting opportunities. The NYS Office of General Services Division of Service-Disabled Veterans' Business Development is responsible for certifying eligible SDVOBs and assisting and promoting their participation in the state's procurement activities.

To learn more, or to apply for certification as a Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business, contact the Division of Service-Disabled Veterans' Business Development, and visit their website, at:

Division of Service-Disabled Veterans' Business Development website,
<https://www.ny.gov/services/become-certified-service-disabled-veteran-owned-small-business>

[518-474-2015](tel:518-474-2015) / VeteransDevelopment@ogs.ny.gov

E-Z Passes for Veterans With Disabilities

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 Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Eligibility is not determined by percent disabled designations, specialty license plates, or other similar criteria.

For more information, visit: <https://veterans.ny.gov/e-zpass-disabled-veterans>

State 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.

Who Is Eligible?

- You are a Veteran with disabilities receiving a motor vehicle under Federal Title 38 (automobiles and adaptive equipment for certain disabled veterans and members of the armed forces) or
- You qualify for and apply for Congressional Medal of Honor custom plates, or
- You qualify for and apply for Former Prisoner of War custom plates.

For more information, visit: <https://veterans.ny.gov/new-york-state-motor-vehicle-registration-fee-exemption>



Veterans' Affairs Committee Updates

Bills Voted Out of Committee for the 2026 Session

A9490, STERN

Chapter 666 of the Laws of 2025 requires DVS to provide information on its website about volunteer opportunities for veterans to serve as volunteer firefighters or EMS providers. This chapter amendment clarifies the information that DVS would be required to post, while maintaining the purpose of the legislation – allowing veterans to use their skills to help their communities.

SIGNED INTO LAW 2-13-2026

A9489, STERN

This bill would amend Chapter 677 of the Laws of 2025, which established a real property tax exemption for service members performing active duty in a combat zone, to facilitate implementation.

SIGNED INTO LAW 3-27-2026

A3397A, RAGA

This legislation would facilitate additional entries on the New York State Veterans Memorial Registry. This legislation will help make steps toward creating a more expansive list of all veteran memorials and monuments in New York State, resulting in the honoring of veterans, the education of the public, and the promotion of tourism.

PASSED ASSEMBLY 2-03-2026

A8057A, BRONSON

This bill establishes a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Veterans Coordinator to complete work under the direction of the Commissioner regarding the unique needs of LGBT veterans.

A10142, STERN

Legislation which would require the New York State Department of Veterans' Services, in consultation with the Department of Health, to evaluate veteran healthcare in New York State.

PASSED ASSEMBLY 5-29-2026

A10163, LAVINE

This legislation directs the New York State Department of Veterans' Services to conduct a mandatory pre-release briefing for veterans incarcerated in state correctional institutions that explains federal and state veterans' benefits and how eligible individuals and families may access these benefits.

PASSED ASSEMBLY 4-28-2026



Veterans' Affairs Committee Updates

A10362A, GRIFFIN

This legislation would review the services that are currently available to veterans with service-connected disabilities by state and local veterans' service agencies and identify any deficiencies in the availability, accessibility and delivery of these services.

PASSED ASSEMBLY 3-16-2026

A10418, STERN

This bill seeks to expand and improve the operation of the Veterans' Services Commission.

PASSED ASSEMBLY 3-16-2026

A10420, CASHMAN

Legislation which would provide greater assistance to veterans in upgrading their character discharge, changing their reason for discharge or seeking any other relief available through the Discharge Review Board or Board for Correction of Military or Naval records for their branch of service on the federal level.

PASSED ASSEMBLY 3-16-2026

A8365A, LEVENBERG

This legislation would permit a veteran living in another state who has a family member residing in New York State to apply to join a New York State Veterans Home, provided that the immediate family member has lived in New York State for at least one year.

A9645A, LAVINE

Codifies and operationalizes a statewide Veteran Suicide Mortality Review Board that systematically reviews veteran suicide deaths, identifies trends and systemic gaps and issues actionable recommendations to save lives.

PASSED ASSEMBLY 6-01-2026

A11022, STERN

This bill would require the Department of Veterans' Services and Department of Economic Development to make the information about federal and state programs available to businesses that employ veterans more widely available.

PASSED ASSEMBLY 5-04-2026



Veterans' Affairs Committee Updates

A5578, Hunter

This bill would expand the list of acceptable documents that a veteran may use to demonstrate eligibility for an additional 10% property tax exemption for service in a combat theater or combat zone of operations to include a DD-214 indicating such service, federal combat pay or tax records, and other military service records approved by the commissioner of taxation and finance.

PASSED ASSEMBLY 5-20-2026

A8061, BRONSON

This bill requires the Department of Veterans' Services to create a women veterans history trail to recognize and celebrate the history of women in military service.

PASSED ASSEMBLY 5-29-2026

A11225-A, SCHIAVONI

Legislation which would increase the statewide goal for participation on state contracts by service-disabled veteran-owned business enterprises from six percent to eight percent.

PASSED ASSEMBLY 5-28-2026

A11294, STERN

A bill which would establish the position of Memorial Affairs Coordinator within the Department of Veterans' Services to help ensure that all veterans and service members receive the proper burial and funeral services to which they are entitled.



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

