



COMMITTEE ON  
**Veterans' Affairs**

**2019** ANNUAL REPORT

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY



CARL E. HEASTIE, *Speaker*

DIDI BARRETT, *Chair*



**Didi Barrett**

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Mental Health  
Tourism, Parks, Arts and  
Sports Development

December 15, 2019

Hon. Carl Heastie, Speaker  
New York State Assembly  
Room 932, Legislative Office Building  
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Mr. Speaker:

It is with great pleasure that I forward to you the 2019 Annual Report of the New York State Assembly Standing Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Several significant pieces of legislation became law this year, most prominently legislation to extend New York State veterans' benefits and services to veterans with an "other than honorable" discharge status and a qualifying condition such as PTSD, traumatic brain injury (TBI), or military sexual trauma (MST), or who were discharged unfairly for being LGBT (Chapter 490 of 2019). This is the most comprehensive legislation in the United States restoring earned benefits to this group of dedicated men and women who served this country. A companion bill codified the Division of Veterans' Services Discharge Upgrade Advisory Board program to help more veterans improve unfair discharge statuses (Chapter 481 of 2019).

The Committee also held several important hearings and roundtables, and advanced legislation to improve reporting on homeless veterans, strengthen the work of the women's veteran coordinator, and crack down on "pension poaching" against veterans. These new laws, and the other 6 chapters originating from this committee, help make New York a national leader in veterans' services.

While I'm proud of the work we completed in 2019, much work remains to be done. In the coming year, the Committee will focus on how to best connect veterans to services - including county-level services and New York's outdoor resources. The Committee also will continue to examine issues related to older veterans, women veterans and employment issues related to veterans.

I wish to extend my appreciation and many thanks to the members of the Committee, the Committee staff, and the veterans of New York State, and to you, Mr. Speaker, for your unwavering support for veterans.

Sincerely,

Didi Barrett  
Member of Assembly  
Chair, Committee on Veterans' Affairs

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY**  
**STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

**Honorable Didi Barrett**  
**Chair**

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## **I. COMMITTEE JURISDICTION AND SUMMARY**

The Assembly Standing Committee on Veterans' Affairs evaluates legislation affecting approximately 750,000 New York State residents who unselfishly served their nation in the United States armed forces, including 58,855 New York State women. The Committee seeks to safeguard programs and promote legislation to benefit veterans and their families. In addition, the Committee maintains an ongoing dialogue with the veteran community and addresses issues affecting the lives of New York State veterans.

Veterans are affected by a number of titles of New York State statute, principally: Civil Service Law, Executive Law, Military Law, Education Law, Real Property Tax Law, Public Health Law, and Retirement and Social Security Law. Amendments to the State Constitution that would affect veterans are also considered by the Committee.

New York State currently offers a variety of veterans' assistance programs, including a real property tax exemption program, educational assistance for certain veterans and their family members, and a State veterans' nursing home program.

This past legislative session, the Committee held four Committee meetings at which it considered 18 bills. Eleven bills passed both houses of the Legislature; eleven were signed into law by the Governor and none were vetoed by the Governor.

While the Committee has jurisdiction over legislation that affects veterans' benefits and programs that help veterans and their families, the Committee does not work alone. Some veterans' initiatives are referred to other standing committees, such as the committees on Governmental Operations, Transportation, Real Property Taxation, Health, Governmental Employees, Environmental Conservation, Election Law, Small Business, Mental Health, Labor, and Tourism, Parks, Arts, and Sports Development. As a result, the Committee's chair, members, and staff work closely with other committees to ensure that this unique population's needs are met.

## II. 2019 LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

### A. Discharge Papers

One of the most important pieces of paperwork that soldiers receive at the end of a military deployment or when ending military service, is the DD 214 Form, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty. This document is issued by the United States Department of Defense (USDOD) upon a military service member's retirement, separation, or discharge from active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States, e.g. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard.

The DD 214 Form is used by various governmental agencies on the federal, state and local levels. The form represents the complete, verified record of a service member's time in the military (both Active and Reserve), awards and medals, and other pertinent service information, including, but not limited to, highest rate and pay grade held on active duty, total combat service and/or overseas service, Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) or Navy officer designator, and a record of training and schools completed. The document also contains codes, known as Separation Designator/Separation Justification Codes and Reenlistment Eligibility Codes, used by the Armed Forces to describe the service member's reason for discharge, and in the case of enlisted personnel, their reenlisted eligibility. In addition, the type of military discharge is also listed on the Form and includes: Honorable Discharge; General Discharge; Other Than Honorable Conditions Discharge; Bad Conduct Discharge, Dishonorable Discharge; Officer Discharge and Entry Level Separation.

#### **“Bad Papers” (A.8097 Barrett; Chapter 490 of the Laws of 2019)**

Many veterans received less than honorable discharges as a result of a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), or as a result of sexual orientation, gender or expression, including pursuant to the federal “Don't Ask Don't Tell Policy.” These discharges were determined at the federal level and cannot be revised by the State, however, a number of State benefits require an honorable discharge. Other states, including Connecticut, have revised their State benefits to include consideration of circumstances such as TBI, MST, and PTSD.

This law defines the following terms:

- “qualifying condition” – PTSD, TBI, MST
- “discharged LGBT veteran” – a veteran who was discharged less than honorably from service due to their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

The law will require the New York State Division of Veterans' Services (DVS) to at a minimum, develop a standardized form to be used to confirm that the veteran has a qualifying condition, standards for verifying a veteran's status as a “discharged LGBT veteran,” and a method of demonstrating eligibility. In addition, various provisions of law that reference the phrases “under honorable conditions” or “has been honorably discharged” were amended to provide benefits for veterans with a qualifying condition and discharged LGBT veterans.

### **Discharge Upgrade Advisory Board (A.8095-A Barrett; Chapter 481 of the Laws of 2019)**

This law will require DVS to maintain a Discharge Upgrade Advisory Board to assist veterans in the process of submitting an application, to the appropriate branch of service, for a discharge upgrade or correction of military records. The Board will review evidence submitted by veterans and, if the application for an upgrade is found meritorious, the Board will provide the veteran with a nonbinding written opinion that could be provided to the military branch reviewing the case.

### **Assisting Veterans with Military Discharge Upgrades (A.8096 Pheffer Amato; Chapter 482 of the Laws of 2019)**

This law will authorize local veterans' service agencies to assist veterans with the process of submitting an application to the Discharge Upgrade Advisory Board established within DVS, pursuant to Chapter 481 of the Laws of 2019.

## **B. Consumer Protection**

“Pension poaching” represents a growing scam targeted at separating elderly and/or disabled veterans from their assets. The scheme involves unscrupulous financial planners or insurance agents claiming to be veterans' advocates. These individuals offer help in submitting a claim for a specific federal U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) benefit that the veteran or family member may not even be eligible to obtain.

The Federal Trade Commission and USVA have each issued warnings about the scheme. Poachers convince veterans to reposition their assets in order to qualify for a benefit such as the “Aid and Attendance Benefit,” which has specific and strict qualifications. In addition, the poachers often sell veterans unneeded financial products or services to earn a commission or fee. Problems arise because the poachers fail to deliver on their promise, do not provide full information about other veterans' benefits and do not reveal the potentially adverse consequences of the financial transactions, such as the loss of Medicaid eligibility.

### **Pension Poaching Prevention Act (A.6292 Mosley; Chapter 183 of the Laws of 2019)**

This law prohibits any entity from receiving compensation for helping veterans and their dependents prepare a claim, except as permitted under the USDVA standards. It also prohibits charging unreasonable fees for services and bans pledging that an individual will receive a specific amount of veterans' benefit money. In addition, this law requires any entity offering benefit advising services to inform customers that DVS and their county or city veterans' service agencies can provide them with free benefit advising services.

### **C. Homeless Veterans**

According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), veterans experience homelessness for the same economic reasons as other members of the homeless population. However, they may also experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and other trauma due to exposure to combat and repeated deployments that can lead to homelessness.

#### **Information on Homeless Veterans (A.5660 Rozic; Chapter 487 of the Laws of 2019)**

This law helps address the issue of homeless veterans in the State by requiring DVS in consultation with the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, Department of Labor, and the Office of Children and Family Services to prepare reports to quantify the number of homeless veterans in the State. The report will analyze: New York veterans who are currently homeless or have been homeless within five years of being released from active duty; data on the number of children of homeless veterans and their placement; cases of military sexual trauma experienced by homeless veterans during active duty or military training; and the unemployment rate for veterans in the State.

### **D. Real Property Tax Exemption**

Under current law, to be eligible for a veterans' real property tax exemption, a person has to have been discharged or separated from active duty military service.

#### **Severely Injured Military Personnel Tax Exemption (A.7289 Barrett; Chapter 479 of the Laws of 2019)**

This law establishes, at local option, a real property tax exemption for severely injured members of the United States Armed Forces who continue their military service and have made accessibility improvements to their existing homes. "Severely injured member of the armed forces" is defined as a member of the armed forces of the United States who has a service-connected disability due to combat and has been found fit to serve by the physical evaluation board of such service member's branch of service.

### **E. Women Veterans**

Women veterans are the largest growing subgroup of veterans in the State, accounting for approximately eight percent of the total number of veterans.

#### **Women Veterans Coordinator (A.7594 Hunter; Chapter 480 of the Laws of 2019)**

This law amends the Women Veterans' Coordinator Law that was passed by the Legislature in 1994, with subsequent amendments in 1999 and 2011 clarifying the duties of this important job at DVS. This law adds new responsibilities to the position, including promoting veterans human rights conferences, veterans benefit and resource events, and veterans' cultural competence training. The coordinator also has to prepare reports on women veterans' issues, including the demographics of women veterans and the unique needs of women veterans.



## **F. Information/Assistance**

Veterans' benefits on the federal, state and local level are not automatic when members of the military are discharged from active duty. Instead, veterans and/or family members must apply for these benefits, making the availability of benefit information essential.

### **Information on Special Veterans Populations (A.1804 Lavine; Chapter 485 of the Laws of 2019)**

The Veterans' Health Care Information Program provides a list of resources for veterans, their families, and health care providers, seeking information on service-connected illnesses. This law extends the Program's depth of practice to include conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), brain-related injuries including TBI, and spina bifida. This law also requires the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision to include the military background and circumstances of incarcerated veterans.

### **Assistance for Military Sexual Trauma (A.2459-A Fahy; Chapter 571 of the Laws of 2019)**

Sexual trauma experienced during service is known as Military Sexual Trauma (MST). The USDVA defines MST as a psychological trauma, which in the judgement of a VA mental health professional, resulted from a physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment that occurred while the veteran was serving on active duty or active training. This law provides information to veterans regarding available MST resources by requiring DVS to maintain a military sexual trauma portal on their website.

### **Listing of County and City Veterans' Service Agencies (A.4413 Stern; Chapter 453 of the Laws of 2019)**

Veterans' services exist not only on the State level, but on the local level as well. To better facilitate accessibility to local veterans' service agencies, this law requires the DVS to post on its website a listing of the local veterans' service agencies including the name, location, hours of operation and contact information for each county and city veterans' service agency in the State. Local veterans' service agencies will make such information available to DVS.

### **DVS Mobile Application (A.6792-A Stern; Chapter 488 of the Laws of 2019)**

This law requires DVS to post a link to its free mobile application on its website.

### **III. BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS**

#### **A. New York State Division of Veterans' Services**

The New York State Division of Veterans' Services (DVS) assists, counsels, and advocates for veterans, military personnel, and their families.

##### **1. Veterans' Benefits Advising Program**

The Veterans' Benefits Advising Program, formerly known as the Counseling Services Program, provides counseling and services through a statewide network of State veteran counselors. The counselors, all of whom are veterans, and support staff, help veterans complete and file applications for state, federal, and private benefits and services. Counselors also serve veterans through outreach to the federal Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers, senior centers, State and local veterans' nursing homes, and public assistance offices. State veteran counselors help ensure that active duty military personnel and their families receive the supplemental benefits to which they are entitled. State veteran counselors receive professional training in veterans' benefits counseling and are accredited by the USDVA. The State Budget for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2019-20 included an allocation of \$11,367,000 for services and expenses related to the Veterans' Benefits Advising Program.

##### **2. County and City Veterans' Service Agencies**

County and city veterans' service agencies are mandated by State law to inform members of the armed forces, reserves, organized militia, and veterans and their families about available education, retraining, medical, and other rehabilitative services and facilities. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$1,380,000 for the County and City Veterans' Service Agencies, an increase of \$203,000 from the prior SFY.

##### **3. Monroe County Veterans' Outreach Center, Inc.**

The Monroe County Veterans' Outreach Center in Rochester, New York, is the nation's oldest community-based outreach center, serving veterans of all eras. The Outreach Center provides counseling services for successful reintegration of veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts into the community, short-term psychological counseling for veterans and their immediate families, residential programs for homeless veterans, and an alternative to incarceration program through the Rochester veterans' court. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$250,000 for the services and expenses related to the Veterans' Outreach Center, Inc.

#### **4. Services & Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Elders (SAGE)**

Services & Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Elders (SAGE) has established a comprehensive program for New York State's elderly LGBT veterans that provides legal counsel, benefits advocacy, and enhanced wraparound services in order to improve veterans' income security and overall well-being. In addition, representation will enable LGBT veterans currently on public assistance, Medicaid, or other State subsidy programs, to apply for veterans' benefits including, but not limited to, income, medical, spousal, and survivor benefits. The SAGE program will provide assistance to LGBT veterans, including helping them to navigate the process of upgrading their discharge if it is necessary for them to access federal VA benefits. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an appropriation of \$100,000 to implement SAGE's comprehensive program for New York State's elderly LGBT veterans. This was a legislative addition to the proposed Executive budget.

#### **5. Legal Services of the Hudson Valley and Military Families Project**

The Veterans and Military Families Advocacy Project, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley provides a full range of civil legal services that resolve the unique legal problems faced by veterans and their families. The goal of the Project is to provide free legal advice and direct representation to veterans in civil (non-criminal) legal matters. The Project covers more than 120,000 veterans living in Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester counties. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$200,000 for this program. This was a legislative addition to the proposed Executive budget.

#### **6. New York State Defenders Association Veterans Defense Program**

The Veterans Defense Program (VDP) helps the most vulnerable veterans by assisting defense attorneys in providing justice to veterans with mental health issues arising out of their military service, and facilitating treatment to begin healing the wounds of war. The New York State Defenders Association provides training and expert legal assistance to attorneys in 120 county-based public defenders offices, legal aid agencies, and assigned counsel staff. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$720,000 for this Program, including \$220,000 for the program's expansion in Long Island. This was a legislative addition to the proposed Executive budget.

#### **7. Helmets to Hardhats Program**

Helmets to Hardhats is a charitable corporation that assists transitioning active duty veterans, as well as members of the Reserves or National Guard, gain employment with the building trades. The Program has been actively placing military veterans in building-trades affiliated apprenticeship programs across the country since 2003 and since 2013 in the City of New York. The program has since been expanded to include Upstate New York. The Program, which is being expanded statewide, fills a void in conventional services available to veterans by streamlining the pathway for veterans seeking to enter the construction trade. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included \$200,000 to facilitate further the Program's statewide expansion. This was a legislative addition to the proposed Executive budget.

## **8. Indigent Burial Services**

Chapters 579 of the Laws of 2015, and Chapter 29 of the Laws of 2016, were enacted to provide dignified burials to indigent veterans whereby congressional-chartered veterans' organizations are selected by the State and counties to provide these services. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 includes a sub-allocation of \$100,000 to the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance for the payment of burial services for indigent veterans.

## **9. Veteran-to-Veteran Support Services**

The concept of Veteran Treatment Courts started in Buffalo, New York. Currently, there are 29 of these courts statewide to address the needs of veterans who find themselves involved in the criminal justice system due to addiction, PTSD, brain injuries, and mental illness. These special courts help veterans by linking them with community service and support, as well as local, state and federal agencies specializing in veterans' services. One of the key components of these courts is veterans who serve as volunteer mentors to the defendants. These individuals provide support and motivation to the veterans who are currently in the court system and help them not only navigate the criminal justice system but also reintegrate into civilian society.

The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$1,000,000 for the following purposes: to support veteran-to-veteran programs maintained by veterans, service organizations; to connect veteran defendants to treatment and support services directed by the criminal justice system; to support such treatment and support services; to provide services to support veterans to avoid involvement with the criminal justice system; to support programs providing counseling and advocacy activities for veterans; and to provide assistance in securing linkages at the national, state and local level. Funds will be made available pursuant to Request for Proposals for congressional chartered veterans' organizations and requests from the Office of Court Administration (OCA) for the various veterans' treatment courts. The \$1 million will be split evenly to service the veteran-to-veteran programs maintained by veterans' service organizations and the veteran mentor support system directed by the criminal justice services.

## **10. Access to Justice Initiatives**

The unmet demand for legal services for veterans and service members remains significant. The Justice for Heroes Initiative is a competitive grant program among the State's law school clinics to provide free legal assistance to veterans and their family members. Areas include foreclosure prevention and other consumer protection matters, family law assistance, discharge upgrades, and complex appeals regarding VA benefits. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 allocated \$250,000 for this Initiative.

## **11. Veterans of Foreign Wars, NYS Chapter Field Service Operation**

In order to be a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), a person must be a U.S. citizen or U.S. national, have served in the Armed Forces of the United States, received an honorable or general discharge and served in war, campaign or expedition on foreign soil or in hostile waters. A veteran service officer of the VFW helps veterans navigate the various benefits available on the federal, state and local level. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$125,000 for the services and expenses of the VFW Chapter Field Service Operation. This was a legislative addition to the proposed Executive budget.

## **12. North Country Veterans' Association**

Located in Plattsburgh, New York, the nonprofit veteran-run North Country Veterans' Association works to assist veterans and their families in obtaining assistance, food, and services. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$100,000 for the services and expenses of the Association. This was a legislative addition to the proposed Executive budget.

## **13. Clear Path for Veterans**

Clear Path for Veterans' mission is to empower service members, veterans and their families through supportive programs and services in a safe, respectful environment. Its model of service helps service members transition to civilian life through wellness-enhancing programming. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$200,000 for the services and expenses of the Clear Path for Veterans organization.

## **14. Veterans' Education Program**

The Veterans' Education Program is operated by the Division of Veterans' Services. The program is located in Albany and New York City and investigates and approves post-secondary educational and vocational institutions for the use of the Division's education benefits and approves on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$2,025,000 for this Program.

## **15. Administration Program**

The Administration Program is primarily composed of two components, Supplemental Burial Benefits and Gold Star Parents Annuity Benefits. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$1,479,000, which includes funding for administrative personnel and operational expenses.

### *New York State Supplemental Burial Benefits*

New York State offers a supplemental burial benefits program to eligible families of military personnel killed in combat, or wounded in combat but dead from their wounds outside of the combat zone. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$400,000 for these Benefits.

### *Gold Star Parents*

Gold Star Parents refer to parents who have lost children in the armed services during a time of war. This appropriation supports the payment of a \$500 annuity to a Gold Star Parent. Up to two parents may claim this annual benefit. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$599,000 for such payments.

### *Blind Veteran Annuity Assistance Program*

Legally blind wartime veterans or surviving un-remarried spouses of legally blind wartime veterans who live in New York are eligible to receive an annuity payment. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$6,380,000.

## **B Division of Military and Naval Affairs**

### **1. New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center**

The New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center are located in the Saratoga Armory in Saratoga Springs, New York. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$1,000,000 for: services and expenses related to youth academic and drug demand reduction programs; the New York Guard; the New York Naval Militia; the New York State Military Museum; the Veterans Research Center; and the preservation and restoration of historic artifacts. In addition, the Budget included an allocation of \$189,000 for operating expenses associated with the Museum and Research Center.

### **2. Recruitment Incentive and Retention Program**

Chapter 268 of the Laws of 1996 established the Recruitment Incentive and Retention Program to provide eligible members of the New York Army National Guard, the New York Air National Guard, and the New York Naval Militia with a tuition benefit for undergraduate study. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an appropriation of \$3,300,000 for this Program.

## **C. Office of Mental Health**

### **1. Peer-To-Peer Veterans Counseling Program**

The PFC Joseph Dwyer PTSD Peer-To-Peer Veterans Counseling Program, which provides “peer-to-peer” counseling between veterans who personally understand the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury, was first funded in the 2012 budget. It began operating in four test counties: Suffolk, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Jefferson, and has since been expanded to fund nineteen additional counties: Broome, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Columbia, Dutchess, Erie, Genesee, Monroe, Nassau, Niagara, Onondaga, Orleans, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Washington, Westchester and Wyoming. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$3,735,000 to fund all 23 counties as well as the University at Albany School of Social Welfare. The SFY 2019-20 appropriation included \$300,000 to expand the program into New York City for the first time.

## **D. Office of Children and Families**

### **1. American Legion Boys State Program**

The American Legion Boy State Program allows qualified male high school juniors to participate in a practical government course designed to develop a working knowledge of government. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$150,000 for this Program. This was a legislative addition to the proposed Executive budget.

### **2. American Legion Auxiliary Empire Girl State Program**

The American Legion Auxiliary Empire Girl State Program allows qualified female high school juniors to create and govern a 51<sup>st</sup> mythical state. These young women learn the duties, privileges, rights and responsibilities of American citizenship in this one-week program. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$150,00 for this Program. This was a legislative addition to the proposed Executive budget.

## **E. Department of Agriculture and Markets**

### **1. Cornell Small Farms Program**

The Cornell Small Farms Program, funded previously in the State budget as part of a first-in-the nation pilot program, provides resources and training to veterans seeking to become farmers. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 included an allocation of \$115,000 to help establish up to five veteran-owned farms. This was a legislative addition to the proposed Executive budget.

## **F. Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)**

### **1. Legal Services Assistance Fund (LSAF)**

The Legal Services Assistance Fund was established pursuant to Chapter 524 of the Laws of 2008 to assist in the provision of and the reimbursement of expenses incurred by local government agencies and not-for-profit providers or their employees relating to providing criminal or civil legal services. The State budget for SFY 2019-20 provided \$950,000 for domestic and veterans' legal services under this program.

## **ARTICLE VII LANGUAGE BILLS**

### **A.2005-C Budget**

#### **Chapter 55 of the Laws of 2019**

##### **Part L**

This Part extended the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise Program until March 31, 2024.

### **A.2006-C Budget**

#### **Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2019**

##### **Part AA**

This Part changed the name of the New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs to the New York State Division of Veterans' Services in order to avoid confusion with the federal Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA).



#### **IV. BILLS THAT PASSED THE ASSEMBLY ONLY**

##### **A. Veterans' Affairs Committee**

###### **1. Outdoor Rx Act (A.8094 Barrett; Passed Assembly)**

Nature has been used for health improvement for centuries. For example, during World War I and World War II, service members worked in gardens to improve functioning of injured limbs and increase mental functions, which was known as horticultural therapy. Recent studies have shown that there are benefits from spending time in nature, including walking through parks, historic sites or participating in organized outside activities including hiking or skiing. This legislation would require DVS to consult with the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Department of Health and the Office of Mental Health to review issues relating to veterans' abilities to access state parks, lands and facilities in order to facilitate greater access.

###### **2. Peacetime Veteran (A.7573 Gunther; Passed Assembly)**

This legislation would permit veterans who have served during peacetime to be eligible for the position of a County Veterans Service Agency director if he or she meets all of the other qualifications.

##### **B. Transportation Committee**

###### **1. (A.2331 Dinowitz; Passed Assembly)**

This legislation would require the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to consult with the Director of the Division of Veterans' Services (DVS) to establish a process by which the DMV shall refer to DVS any driver's license and non-driver identification card applicant who requests and receives a notation upon such license or non-driver identification card that he or she is a veteran.

## **V. BILLS REPORTED BY OTHER COMMITTEES THAT BECAME LAW**

### **A. Codes Committee**

#### **1. Problem-Solving Courts (A.5937 Galef; Chapter 634 of the Laws of 2019)**

In 2008, New York established the nation's first veterans' treatment court in Erie County. Since then, the concept of veterans' courts has expanded statewide and throughout the nation. Veterans' courts have been successful, in part, because many of these courts link troubled veterans with volunteer veteran mentors, who provide support and guidance for the veteran and assistance to the court.

Pursuant to this law, appropriate pending cases could be transferred from a town or village court to another court, within the same county, that the Office of Court Administration has designated as a problem-solving court. This will allow the centralization of similar cases, increasing efficiency and concentrating law enforcement and therapeutic resources for specific populations, including veterans.

### **B. Economic Development Committee**

#### **1. Sale of Certain Beverages at Games of Chance (A.5059-A Barrett; Chapter 188 of the Laws of 2019)**

This law expands the types of alcoholic beverages that can be consumed and served at games of chance held by organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion. Previously these organizations were required to obtain a full retail license for on premise consumption that allowed them to serve all alcoholic beverages in their bar/dining areas. If however, these same organizations operated games of chance, such as bingo, in another area, patrons could only be served beer. This law allows organizations to provide patrons with the option of purchasing cider and wine.

### **C. Education Committee**

#### **1. Operation Recognition Expansion (A.4654 Rozic; Chapter 477 of the Laws of 2019)**

Operation Recognition provides certain veterans with the opportunity to receive high school diplomas based on the knowledge and experience they gained while in the service. This law expands coverage to include all veterans enlisted in military service after the end of the Vietnam War, including those who served in Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

## **D. Election Law Committee**

### **1. Facilitating Voting for Members Stationed Overseas (A.779 Lavine; Chapter 5 of the Laws of 2019)**

In 2009, President Obama signed into law the Military Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act that expanded the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) of 1986. UOCAVA required states to allow members of the uniformed services and merchant marines, their family members, and U.S. citizens residing outside the United States to register and vote absentee in elections for federal offices. The MOVE Act was designed to provide greater voting right protections. Among the provisions, the MOVE Act requires states to transmit validly requested absentee ballots to UOCAVA voters no later than 45 days before a federal election, unless granted an undue hardship waiver. Although New York State was granted a waiver in 2010, New York's election laws remained out of compliance with the 45-day requirement. This law merges the federal non-presidential and state primaries to comply with MOVE and ensure that military personnel will have an opportunity to vote.

### **2. School District Elections (A.7293 Thiele; Chapter 489 of the Laws of 2019)**

This law provides military voters with the opportunity to vote in school district elections, including the election of library trustees, and the adoption of annual school and public library budgets and referenda.

## **E. Governmental Employees Committee**

### **1. 55-C Program (A.6297 Barrett; Chapter 486 of the Laws of 2019)**

Section 55-C of the Civil Service Law currently authorizes 500 positions to be filled with wartime veterans with disabilities. Unfortunately, it seems the program is not being fully utilized because there is no system to differentiate between 55-C eligible positions and the general pool of jobs. This law requires State job postings to prominently display 55-C eligible positions.

### **2. Age Requirements for Appointments and Promotions (A.8348 Ortiz; Chapter 570 of the Laws of 2019)**

Section 243 of the Military Law authorizes veterans to receive special consideration when State law establishes a maximum age limit for appointment or promotion. Previously, veterans were eligible to receive a maximum of six years. This law increases the maximum number of years to seven.

**3. Age Requirements for Certain NYC Employees (A.8282 Abbate; Chapter 484 of the Laws of 2019)**

Section 243 of the Military Law authorizes veterans to receive special consideration when State law establishes a maximum age limit for appointment or promotion. Previously, veterans were eligible to receive a maximum of six years. This law increases the maximum number of years to seven in New York City.

**F. Governmental Operations Committee**

**1. Additional Paid Leave for Health-Related Services (A.1093-B Paulin; Chapter 476 of the Laws of 2019)**

Military Law currently authorizes State employees to receive additional paid leave to seek health services related to their combat injuries. This law provides the same benefit to municipal employees.

**G. Judiciary Committee**

**1. Marriage License Fee Waiver (A.55 Buchwald; Chapter 177 of the Laws of 2019)**

Municipal clerks currently charge \$30 for marriage licenses. This law waives the marriage license fee for active duty members of the armed forces and allows localities to do the same.

**H. Local Governments Committee**

**1. Fee Waiver for Veterans Organizations (A.7234 Thiele; Chapter 478 of the Laws of 2019)**

This law authorizes Nassau and Suffolk Counties to waive fees, including but not limited to, building permit review fees and fees associated with capital improvements, for any post or hall owned by a veterans' organization.

**2. Fee Waiver for Veterans Organizations (A.8109 Woerner; Chapter 483 of the Laws of 2019)**

This law authorizes Washington and Saratoga Counties to waive fees, including but not limited to, building permit review fees and fees associated with capital improvements, for any post or hall owned by a veterans' organization.

**3. Fee Waiver for Veterans Organizations (A.8362 Burke; Chapter 436 of the Laws of 2019)**

This law authorizes Erie County to waive fees, including but not limited to, building permit review fees and fees associated with capital improvements, for any post or hall owned by a veterans' organization.

## **I. Mental Health Committee**

### **1. Public Education to Eliminate the Stigma of Mental Illness (A.2758-A Ortiz; Chapter 378 of the Laws of 2019)**

The United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has identified a pronounced stigma associated with mental illness within the military service community, leading to concerns about personal embarrassment and fear of dishonorable discharge, including reducing the willingness of service members to seek help. This law creates a public education initiative designed to eliminate stigma and misinformation about mental illness and substance abuse, among service members.

### **2. Suicide Prevention Reporting (A.7564-B Fernandez; Chapter 626 of the Laws of 2019)**

This law requires the Office of Mental Health (OMH) to prepare a yearly written report on plans and programs related to suicide prevention. In addition to delineating the progress OMH has made, the report would also include information on specific suicide prevention services and initiatives developed and implemented to address the needs of special populations, including veterans.

## **VI. HONORING VETERANS THROUGH LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTIONS**

### **A. Commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The American Legion (Resolution No. 172, Barrett)**

The American Legion is a veteran organization that was founded in Paris on March 15, 1919, by three officers of the American Expeditionary Forces, who fought in World War I. On May 8, 1919, the St. Louis Caucus was held to organize the soldiers and sailors in every state to become members of the new organization. On May 24, 1919, the national organization issued the Department of New York American Legion its charter. On September 16, 1919, the United States Congress chartered The American Legion. This resolution commemorates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The American Legion.

### **B. Commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day Invasion on June 6, 2019 (Resolution No. 520, Peoples-Stokes)**

On June 6, 1944, the Allied Forces in Europe combined for the extensive aerial and sea assault operation, known as the D-Day Invasion, at the beaches of Normandy, France. This military undertaking would change the direction of World War II. The code-name was Operation Overlord, consisting of five infantry divisions, two American, two British, and one Canadian, assigned to beaches code-named, from west to east, Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. This resolution commemorates the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of one of the largest successful amphibious military assaults in history.

### **C. Commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Commissioning of the USS Slater DE766 (Resolution No. 592, McDonald)**

The U.S.S. Slater DE766 is a Destroyer Escort Historical Museum moored on the Hudson River in Albany, New York. The ship has been designated as a National Historic Landmark. The Slater, commissioned on May 1, 1944, had an illustrious history during World War II in both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters, escorting 196 merchant ships across the Atlantic without any losses. This resolution commemorates the Slater's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### **D. Commemorating the Capital Region Chamber of Commerce's Military Appreciation Event (Resolution No. 148, Santabarbara)**

The Unified Military Affairs Council Program increases public knowledge of the contributions made by military units in the Capital Region, which impact our global, national, state and regional economy. The program highlights the importance of the military presence in the Capital area that includes the Stratton Air National Guard Base, the US Army Watervliet Arsenal, the Naval Support Activity in Saratoga Springs, and the Nuclear Power Training Unit. This resolution commends the Capital Region Chamber of Commerce upon the occasion of celebrating the Military Appreciation event on March 13, 2019.

**E. Commemorating the Centennial of World War I, and Celebration of York Avenue On Manhattan's East Side (Resolution No. 631, Seawright)**

This resolution commemorates the Centennial of World War I and the celebration of York Avenue in Manhattan, named for one of the most dedicated soldiers in World War I, Sergeant Alvin York.

## **VII. HONORING SERVICEMEN AND SERVICEWOMEN THROUGH LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTIONS**

### **A. Honoring United States Army Staff Sergeant David Bellavia for his designation as a Medal of Honor Recipient (Resolution No. 562, Hawley)**

During the Battle of Fallujah, United States Army Staff Sergeant David Bellavia rescued his squad and cleared out a house full of Iraqi insurgents. This meritorious veteran was honored with the Medal of Honor on Tuesday, June 25, 2019, in a White House ceremony. This resolution honors New York State resident Staff Sergeant Bellavia.

### **B. Recognizing September 29, 2019, as Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day, and Honoring the Sacrifices of New York's Gold Star Family Members (Resolution No. 514, Barrett)**

A Gold Star family is the immediate family member(s) of a service member who died while serving in a time of conflict. Gold Star Mother's Day has been observed by presidential proclamation each year since 1936, beginning with Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Since 2009, the last Sunday in September has been designated as Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day. This resolution recognizes September 29, 2019 as Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day in the State of New York.

## **VIII. MEMORIALIZING THE GOVERNOR TO PROCLAIM VETERAN-RELATED EVENTS**

### **A. Memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim March 29, 2019, as Vietnam Veterans' Day (Resolution No. 234, Barrett)**

More than 3 million American service members fought in the Vietnam War from 1961 to 1975. This resolution memorializes Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to honor that service and proclaim March 29, 2019, as Vietnam Veterans' Day.

### **B. Memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 9, 2019, as Yellow Ribbon Day (Resolution No. 242, Santabarbara)**

Yellow ribbons are symbols that citizens can display to show support for and solidarity with the service members around the world protecting our nation. This resolution memorializes Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 9, 2019, as Yellow Ribbon Day.



**C. Memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 9, 2019, as West Point Day (Resolution No. 330, Schmitt)**

By an act of Congress, on March 16, 1802, the United States Military Academy was established on the banks of the Hudson River at present-day West Point, New York. Since its establishment, the U.S. Military Academy and its graduates have become an integral part of the proud history of New York State and the nation. The leadership and sacrifices of the members of the Long Grey Line have helped protect the country from outside threats to our freedom. While the Academy's alumni have excelled on the battlefield, they have also excelled in many other fields, strengthening the country. This resolution memorializes Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 9, 2019, as West Point Day.

**D. Memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 13, 2019, as Blue Star Families' Day (Resolution No. 376, McDonald)**

Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc. dates back to World War II and is a support organization for mothers of children serving, or who have served, in the United States military. During World War II, there were approximately 30,000 Blue Star Mothers, and several thousand during the Korean War, Vietnam War, and Iraq and Afghanistan military actions. This resolution memorializes Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 13, 2019, as Blue Star Families' Day.

**E. Memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim June 2019 as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Month (Resolution No. 506, Simotas)**

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms can be acute or long-term and include hyper-vigilance, panic attacks, intrusive memories, flashbacks, nightmares, insomnia, avoidance, dissociation, hopelessness, and intense feelings of guilt and shame. This resolution memorializes Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim June 2019 as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Month.

**F. Memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim June 2019, as Post-Traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Month, and June 27, 2019, as Post-Traumatic Stress Injury Day (Resolution No. 541, DenDekker)**

The diagnosis known as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was first defined by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980 to more accurately understand and treat veterans who endured severe traumatic combat stress. This resolution memorializes Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim June 2019 as Post-Traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Month and June 27, 2019, as Post-Traumatic Stress Injury Day.

**G. Memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim November 3-9,2019, as Veterans' Awareness Week (Resolution No. 624, Jean-Pierre)**

Members of the Armed Services have made sacrifices and provided the utmost service, all for the cause of protecting the country's freedom, in times of warfare and in times of peace preservation. This resolution memorializes Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim November 3-9, 2019, as Veterans' Awareness Week.

**H. Memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 10, 2019, as Military Spouse Appreciation Day (Resolution No. 375, Barrett)**

Military spouses share a bond with each other, serve as a support network, and share valuable information such as military news and benefits. In celebration of Military Spouse Appreciation Day, the armed forces host special events and program to inform, honor, and recognize military spouses around the world. This resolution memorializes Governor Cuomo to proclaim May 10, 2019, as Military Spouse Appreciation Day.

**I. Memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 2019, Military Appreciation Month (Resolution No. 419, Barrett)**

National Military Appreciation Month, designated by Congress, provides a period encompassing both the history and recognition of our armed forces with an in-depth look at the diversity of its individuals and achievements. This special month allows New Yorkers to educate each generation on the historical impact of our military through the participation of the community with those who serve, encouraging patriotism and love of America. This resolution recognizes the servicemen and women, veterans, military retirees and all their families and respectfully requests Governor Cuomo to proclaim May 2019 as Military Appreciation Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the national observance.

**J. Memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim April 11, 2019, as Submarine Day (Resolution No. 277, Walsh)**

The American submarine community celebrates National Submarine Day on the anniversary of United States government's acquisition of its first modern commissioned submarine, the USS HOLLAND, on April 11, 1900. A submarine is a watercraft capable of independent operation underwater. The submarine has played a vital part in wars in which our Nation's freedom was at stake and in the preservation of naval security and strategic readiness. This resolution memorializes Governor Cuomo to proclaim April 11, 2019, as Submarine Day.

**K. Memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 14, 2019, as 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and Fort Drum Day (Resolution No. 391, Blackenbush)**

Fort Drum, previously known as Pine Camp, was renamed in honor of Lieutenant General Hugh Drum, a decorated national hero, former commander of the First Army during World War II, and an early leader of the New York Guard. Fort Drum has been the home of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, one of the most deployed divisions of the United States Army, for 34 years. During the 2018 federal fiscal year, Fort Drum provided training and base operations to support more than 27,000 Reservists and National Guardsmen, as well as personnel from other federal, state and local agencies. This resolution memorializes Governor Cuomo to proclaim May 14, 2019, as 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and Fort Drum Day in the State of New York.

**L. Memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim September 20, 2019, as POW/MIA Day in the State of New York (Resolution No. 588, Cusick)**

Each year, the third Friday in September is set aside to honor the commitment and sacrifices made by this nation's Prisoners of War (POW) and those who are still Missing In Action (MIA), as well as their families. Currently, there are 73,539 persons unaccounted for from World War I, 7,882 from the Korean War, 126 from the Cold War, 1,641 from the Vietnam War and 6 from recent conflicts, for a total of 83,194 soldiers either held as Prisoners of War or classified as Missing in Action. This resolution memorializes Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim September 20, 2019, as POW/MIA Day in the State of New York to ensure all New Yorkers remember to stand behind those who served and to make sure we do everything we can to account for those who have never returned.

**M. Memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim November 2019, as Military Family Appreciation Month (Resolution No. 604, Barrett)**

Military Family Appreciation Month was established in 1996 by the Armed Services YMCA with the United States Government recognizing the occasion every year since. During Military Family Appreciation Month, we honor the contributions and sacrifices made by military families, whose commitment and support help keep our country safe. Military families have a great impact on our lives and our military communities. This resolution memorializes Governor Cuomo to proclaim November 2019, as Military Family Appreciation Month.

## **IX. OTHER ACTIVITIES BY THE VETERANS' COMMITTEE**

### **A. Hearings and Roundtables**

#### **1. Therapeutic Benefits of Outdoor Recreation for Veterans**

The Committee held a roundtable on May 16, 2019, in Albany, on the subject of the therapeutic benefits of outdoor recreation for veterans. One of the outcomes of the discussion was the need for legislation to study how to improve use of New York's natural resources by veterans for therapeutic and recreational benefits. This includes studying current barriers that exist to connecting veterans to the outdoors, such as transportation and familiarity with outdoor settings, and studying the kind of benefits State agencies can offer to veterans and their families to encourage increased outdoor access. Legislation was introduced, A.8094 (Barrett), that addressed these key ideas.

#### **2. Delivery of Veterans' Services and Programs**

On October 17, 2019, the Committee, in conjunction with the Assembly Committees on Local Governments and Cities and the Subcommittee on Women Veterans, held a public hearing in Albany on the delivery of veterans' services and programs in New York State. The information that was provided will be helpful to the Committees and Subcommittee as they continue to explore how best to deliver services to the diverse community of New York veterans and military families. Those who participated included the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, DVS, the New York City Department of Veterans' Services, the Institute for Veterans and Military Families; the American Legion Department of New York, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, New York State Council of Veterans Organizations, SAGE and the Veterans Advocacy Project.

#### **3. Suicide Prevention Supports and Services**

On December 9, 2019, in conjunction with the Assembly Committees on Mental Health and Health, the Committee held a hearing in Albany to obtain information on suicide prevention support services in New York State.

### **B. Subcommittee on Women Veterans**

The Subcommittee on Women Veterans sponsored the 26<sup>th</sup> annual Women Veterans' Recognition Day on June 3, 2019, hosting a luncheon to recognize and celebrate the brave women who have so valiantly served our nation. The keynote speaker was Laura Stradley, Executive Director for the Veterans Outreach Center, Inc. located in Rochester, New York. Ms. Stradley is an Army veteran who was on active duty for eight years. She has co-authored two books: The Pocket Idiot's Guide to the ASVAB and The Complete Idiot's Guide to the ASVAB. Other speakers included Beth G. Kubala, Director of the Legal Clinic at Syracuse University's Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF), and Venecia DeRoose, peer support manager at Clear Path for Veterans. At the beginning of the Session day, the veterans were introduced and received a standing ovation in the New York State Assembly Chamber.

For the second time, there were informational tables about various programs specifically related to women veterans. They included: Albany VA Women's Clinic; Amyx, Inc.; Clear Path for Veterans, Veterans and Military Admissions at Syracuse University; IVMF; and the Women Marines Association.

To commemorate the event, the Assembly adopted one resolution and passed one bill specifically concerning women veterans.

- Assembly Resolution No. 473 (Hunter), memorializing Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim June 12, 2019, as Women Veterans' Recognition Day.
- A.7594 (Hunter, Chapter 480 of the Laws of 2019), increases the duties of the women veterans' coordinator to include advocating for all women veterans in the State of New York.

### **C. Other Veterans-Related Events**

#### **1. "1969" Exhibit at the Empire State Plaza's Vietnam Memorial Gallery**

On May 8, 2019, a new exhibit opened which explores the pivotal year 1969 in the history of our nation. 1969 was a year in which America was participating in the Vietnam War, astronauts landed on the moon, and Sesame Street first aired. This exhibit used powerful imagery, archival footage, and artifacts on loan to bring the visitors on a journey to major events happening in America and Vietnam. The exhibition allows visitors to hear short stories recounted by veterans from across the State of New York, who share their own 1969 experience in Vietnam. Among those who participated at the opening of this special exhibit was Assemblywoman Didi Barrett, chair of the New York State Assembly Veterans' Affairs Committee, and the Assembly's Sergeant of Arms, Wayne P. Jackson, Vietnam Veteran.

## **X. OUTLOOK FOR 2020**

The Committee is looking forward to a productive year in 2020 and will continue to work with the DVS, the Division of Military and Naval Affairs, other State agencies, veterans' organizations, and individual veterans throughout New York State to develop legislation to assist the veterans of the State.

The issues that the Committee intends to pursue include the following:

- improving veterans' mental health and outreach programs to help veterans in need of specific care related to mental health, PTSD, TBI, MST, and substance abuse;
- increasing outreach to recently-discharged veterans;
- reviewing veterans' employment opportunities;
- increasing outreach to veterans of all ages in all areas of the State; and,
- tailoring outreach to women and minority veterans to better identify and respond to their needs.

The Committee will continue to strive to address the needs of New York's more than 700,000 veterans and their families.

**APPENDIX A**  
**2019 SUMMARY SHEET**

**Summary of Action on All Bills Referred to the Committee on**  
**VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

<b>Final Action</b>	<b>Assembly <u>Bills</u></b>	<b>Senate <u>Bills</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
<b><u>Bills Reported With or Without Amendment</u></b>			
To Floor; Not Returning to Committee (Favorable)	7	0	7
To Ways & Means	3	0	3
To Codes	1	0	1
To Rules	3	0	3
To Judiciary	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>
<b><u>Bills Having Committee Reference Changed</u></b>			
To Ways and Means	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b><u>Bills Defeated in Committee</u></b>	0	0	0
<b><u>Bills Held for Consideration With a Roll-Call Vote</u></b>	4	0	4
<b><u>Bills Never Reported or Held in Committee</u></b>	0	0	0
<b><u>Bills Having Enacting Clause Stricken</u></b>	0	0	0
<b><u>Motion to Discharge Lost</u></b>	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL BILLS IN COMMITTEE</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD</b>		<b>4</b>	

## APPENDIX B

### COMMITTEE CHAPTERS/VETOES

<b>Assembly Bill</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Final Action</b>
A.1804	Lavine	Requires increased information to be available, including specific mental and physical health issues to be included on the Veterans' Health Care Information Program website.	Chapter 485
A.2459-A	Fahy	Requires information to be available on where veterans can seek help for Military Sexual Trauma (MST).	Chapter 571
A.4413	Stern	Requires DVS to post a listing of specific local veterans' services agency information on its website.	Chapter 453
A.5660	Rozic	Requires reporting on the number of homeless veterans in the State.	Chapter 487
A.6292	Mosley	Prohibits any person from charging a fee for providing benefit assistance, also known as "pension poaching."	Chapter 183
A.6792-A	Stern	Requires DVS to post a link to its app on its website.	Chapter 82
A.7289	Barrett	Establishes a real property tax exemption, at local option, for severely injured service members who have made accessibility improvements to their existing homes.	Chapter 479
A.7594	Hunter	Clarifies and updates the duties of the women veterans' coordinator with DVS.	Chapter 480
A.8095-A	Barrett	Requires DVS to maintain a Discharge Upgrade Advisory Board.	Chapter 481
A.8096	Pheffer Amato	Authorizes local veterans' service agencies to assist veterans in submitting discharge upgrade applications.	Chapter 482
A.8097	Barrett	Amends State law to allow veterans with a qualifying condition such as PTSD, MST or TBI, or discharged LGBT veterans, who have received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable to receive State benefits.	Chapter 490



## APPENDIX C

### COMMITTEE BILLS THAT PASSED THE ASSEMBLY ONLY

<b>Assembly Bill</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Description</b>
A.7573	Gunther	Would permit peacetime veterans to be eligible for the position of county veterans' service agency director if he or she meets all other qualifications.
A.8094	Barrett	Would establish the Outdoor Rx Act to require certain State agencies to review issues related to veterans' abilities to access State parks, lands, and facilities.