

Assemblyman
Michael Cusick
Reports to

November 2015

NEW YORK VETERANS



Dear Veteran,

As your representative, it is my absolute honor and privilege to serve you and your family in Albany and here on Staten Island. During my career in the Assembly I have passed legislation prohibiting the protest of military funerals, formed a Veterans Discount Program on Staten Island, and have served on the Veterans Affairs Committee since 2003. I am reaching out to you to make sure you have as much information as possible about the wide variety of community resources available to you and your loved ones. I urge you to take a look at this material, and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact my office at (718) 370-1384 or visit us at 1911 Richmond Avenue, near the intersection of Signs Road.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Cusick
Member of Assembly

VETERANS DISCOUNT PROGRAM



Assemblyman Cusick partnered with the Staten Island Chamber of Commerce to initiate a discount program for veterans of the United States military who live on Staten Island. Over 100 local businesses, ranging from auto body shops to law firms to restaurants, are currently members of this program as it continues to grow. To join this program and receive reductions on goods and services at participating businesses, sign up at Assemblyman Cusick's office at 1911 Richmond Avenue. Please bring your discharge papers (DD-214) to receive your Staten Island VETS card. You will be given a listing of participating businesses that offer discounts at their establishments. For more information, contact our district office at 718-370-1384.



OPERATION RECOGNITION

HELPING OUR VETERANS GET
THEIR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS

Operation Recognition was created to recognize the dedication and sacrifice of World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam veterans who left school before graduation to join the military. In 2005, a law Assemblyman Cusick authored (A.239/Chapter 652) added our Vietnam veterans to Operation Recognition. This program acknowledges that the experiences and skills learned in the defense of freedom have given veterans unique knowledge and special insight most could never attain. This diploma reflects our pride and gratitude for their sacrifices and bravery.

Who is Eligible?

- Must have been a member of the U.S. Armed Forces, and engaged in qualified service during the below periods:
 - * World War II: December 7, 1941 – December 31, 1946
 - * Korea: June 27, 1950 – January 31, 1955
 - * Vietnam: February 28, 1961 – May 7, 1975
- Is a resident of New York State and received a satisfactory discharge

To participate, veterans need to only present one of the following as proof of service:

- DD Form 214 (Report of Separation)
- Certificate of Service (Honorably Served)
- Certificate of Release or Discharge from Department of Defense (Merchant Marines)
- Letter from a recognized veterans agency affirming such service

How do you apply for a diploma?

- Interested veterans should bring their honorable discharge certificate or letter to any New York State school that issues general or local diplomas. There is no fee for this service.
- Candidates do not need to show evidence of attendance at a school in New York State. They only need to affirm in writing that they do not possess a high school diploma.

Candidates that possess a High School Equivalency (GED) diploma and can provide proof of service are eligible for the program. Diplomas may also be awarded to the next of kin if eligibility is established.

For more information contact Assemblyman Cusick's office (1911 Richmond Ave., 718-370-1384) or the New York State Education Department 518-474-8940.



VETERANS TUITION AWARDS

The New York State Higher Education Service Corporation (HESC) provides Veterans Tuition Awards for full-time study and part-time study for eligible veterans matriculated in an approved program at an undergraduate or graduate degree-granting institution or in an approved vocational training program in

New York State. Veterans who wish to apply must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and an accompanying application available by calling 1-888-697-4372. For more information on this program, please visit: <http://www.hesc.ny.gov/pay-for-college/financial-aid/types-of-financial-aid/nys-grants-scholarships-awards/veterans-tuition-awards.html>

MILITARY ENHANCED RECOGNITION INCENTIVE AND TRIBUTE (MERIT) FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM

This program benefits children, spouses, and financial dependents of those who, while New York State residents, served in the U.S. Armed Forces or state-organized militia at any time after August 2, 1990, and died, became severely and permanently disabled, or were classified as missing in action in a combat zone. Those who qualify for this program are eligible for up to \$22,487 in funding to cover tuition, room & board, and living expenses. For more information, visit: <https://webapps.hesc.ny.gov/questionnaire/page.hesc?questionnaireId=37&versionNumber=1>

NEW YORK STATE REGENTS AWARDS FOR CHILDREN OF DECEASED AND DISABLED VETERANS

This program is designed for children of those who we lost or became seriously disabled while serving in our armed forces. The program provides \$450 per year to these students. To apply for this program, please visit: <https://webapps.hesc.ny.gov/questionnaire/page.hesc?questionnaireId=13&versionNumber=3>

COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND VETERANS SUPPORT SERVICES

The College of Staten Island has initiated a Veterans Support Services program on campus, ready to serve the institution's 200+ veterans and any new students who may enroll. Ranked by G.I. Jobs as a "Veteran Friendly" School five years running, the College of Staten Island has a variety of services available for veterans including wellness evaluations, academic advisement, and educational & financial aid benefits among so much more. To learn more, visit: <http://www.csi.cuny.edu/veterans/>

EXTENDING IN-STATE TUITION RATES TO OUR VETERANS

In 2014, the State Legislature passed legislation which allows veterans attending a community college, the State University of New York, or the City University of New York under the federal GI bills to qualify for the in-state-tuition rate. Extending this offer to our veterans is another example of the commitment made by New York State to those who fought and served our country after their active duty concludes.

CUSTOM LICENSE PLATES AVAILABLE FOR NEW YORK'S VETERANS AND ACTIVE MILITARY PERSONNEL

Custom license plates are available through the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles for military members and veterans. The list of plates available includes:

Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, Airborne, American Legion, Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Coast Guard Auxiliary, Coast Guard Reserve, Combat Infantrymen, Congressional Medal of Honor, Disabled American Veteran, Disabled Veteran, Eighth Air Force Historical Society, Former Prisoner of War, 40 & 8 (The Grande Voiture du New York, La Societe Des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux), Gold Star Mother, Jewish War Veterans of America, Korean War Veterans, Marine Corps League, Marine Corps Reserve, Naval

Militia, Navy Reserve, Pearl Harbor Survivor, Persian Gulf Veteran, Purple Heart Recipient (Vehicle Plate), Purple Heart Recipient (Motorcycle Plate), Saratoga National Cemetery Honor Guard Association, State Guard, U.S. Naval Armed Guard, U.S. Submarine Veterans, U.S. Veteran (Vehicle Plate), U.S. Veteran (Motorcycle Plate), Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veteran, Vietnam Veterans of America, War on Terror Veteran, West Point, and World War II Veterans.

The requirements and cost for these custom plates can be found on the New York State Department of Motor Vehicle website at <http://www.dmv.ny.gov> or by calling the Custom Plate Order Call Center at 518-402-4838.

RESOURCES FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

There are a number of resources available to veterans and their families who need assistance.

New York State Division of Veterans Affairs
www.veterans.ny.gov
Call toll free: 888-838-7697

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
www.va.gov
800-827-1000

Health Care Benefits
877-222-8387

Veterans Affairs Benefits
800-827-1000

Women Veterans Call Center
855-829-6636

Combat Call Center
877-927-8387

Education (GI Bill)
888-442-4551

New York State Division of Veterans Affairs
Borough Hall Building, Room 313
10 Richmond Terrace
Staten Island, NY 10301
718-447-8787

Veterans Health Center
Healthcare for Disabled Veterans
1150 South Avenue, 3rd Floor – Suite 301
Staten Island, NY 10314
718-761-2973

Staten Island Vet Center
60 Bay Street
Staten Island, NY 10301
718-816-4499 or 1-877-927-8387

Richmond County Senior Services
500 Jewett Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10302
718-816-1811

VA Medical Center (Brooklyn)
800 Poly Place
Brooklyn, New York 11209
718-836-6600

VA Medical Center (Manhattan)
423 E 23rd Street
New York, NY 10010
212-686-7500

Beneficiaries in Receipt of Pension Benefits
877-294-6380

Debt Management Center (Collection of Non-Medical Debts)
800-827-0648

Children of Women Vietnam Veterans (CWVV) Foreign Medical Program (FMP)
877-345-8179

Spina Bifida Health Care Program
888-820-1756

Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) & CHAMPVA In-House Treatment Initiative (CITI)
800-733-8387

Smoking Cessation Counselors
855-784-8838

Combat Call Center
877-927-8387

Life Insurance for Service Members and/or Veterans Group Life Insurance Program
800-419-1473

All Other VA Life Insurance Programs
800-669-8477

Mammography Helpline
888-492-7844

Women Veterans Hotline
855-829-6636

CHAMPVA Meds by Mail
888-385-0235

Gulf War/Agent Orange/Project Shad/Mustard Agents & Lewisite/Ionizing Radiation
800-749-8387

Status of Headstones & Markers
800-697-6947

Veterans Crisis Line
800-273-8255 (Press 1)

Text to 838255 to Get Help NOW

Help for Alcohol, Drug Abuse or Problem Gambling
1-877-846-7369

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has made your name and address available to us as part of its outreach program. Aside from that it is not involved in administering this local program or newsletter. Under Federal law, no other use of your name and address by the Assembly of the State of New York - 63rd District is permitted.

VETERANS BUSINESS OUTREACH PROGRAM AND VETERANS SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Veterans Business Outreach Program and the Veterans Services and Assistance Program work together to provide targeted training, counseling, and mentoring to help veterans start and grow a small business. Advisors also help veterans who are currently small business owners improve profitability and expand their opportunities. There is no charge for these services. For more information, call toll-free at 1-800-732-7232 or the Veterans Assistance & Services Program in New York City at (718) 797-0187 ext. 308.



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MILITARY DECORATIONS FOR NEW YORK STATE VETERANS

Many veterans are not aware that New York State has three military decorations—the New York State Conspicuous Service Star, the Medal for Merit, and the Conspicuous Service Cross.

The awards are available to New York State residents who served honorably in the U.S. military and who received a military citation while serving in the U.S. armed forces and are recipients of specific commendations, decorations or awards. For information and applications for these military decorations, contact Assemblyman Cusick's office (1911 Richmond Ave., 718-370-1384), or the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs at 518-786-4520, or visit their website at <http://dmna.ny.gov>.



1911 Richmond Avenue • Staten Island, NY 10314 • 718-370-1384

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