

S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

2825--A

2009-2010 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

March 4, 2009

Introduced by Sen. ADAMS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security and Military Affairs -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to a veteran speaker education program within the division of veterans' affairs

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. Legislative findings and intent. The legislature hereby
2 finds that the defining moments of our nation's history came in wartime,
3 especially during the great conflicts of the twentieth century. The
4 legislature further maintains that it is imperative that all of society,
5 and particularly young people, be aware of the contributions of those
6 who participated in these conflicts as members of the armed forces.
7 These men and women established a remarkable record of service and
8 sacrifice. They were ordinary men and women who did extraordinary things
9 to preserve and protect our nation and its cherished freedoms. Their
10 personal accounts, which constitute a valuable historical record, are in
11 danger of being lost forever as these individuals pass away. The legis-
12 lature, therefore, has determined that it is necessary and appropriate
13 to take steps to help encourage greater knowledge and appreciation of
14 veterans, particularly in our schools.
15 In this regard, many states have already enacted school-based programs
16 honoring those who served in the military. The legislature now finds
17 and declares that New York should make available to students, teachers
18 and administrators in public and private schools a new resource that
19 will encourage greater understanding and appreciation of the contribu-
20 tion of veterans.
21 S 2. The executive law is amended by adding a new section 353-a to
22 read as follows:

EXPLANATION--Matter in *ITALICS* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[] is old law to be omitted.

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1 S 353-A. VETERAN SPEAKER EDUCATION PROGRAM. 1. THERE IS HEREBY ESTAB-
2 LISHED WITHIN THE DIVISION A VETERAN SPEAKER EDUCATION PROGRAM TO BE
3 DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED BY THE DIRECTOR IN CONSULTATION WITH THE
4 DIRECTOR OF THE NEW YORK STATE MILITARY MUSEUM AND VETERANS RESOURCE
5 CENTER AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION. SUCH
6 PROGRAM SHALL PROVIDE SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITHIN THIS STATE WITH A LISTING
7 OF AVAILABLE VETERAN SPEAKERS WILLING TO VISIT CLASSROOMS FOR THE
8 PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING THEIR MILITARY EXPERIENCE.

9 2. THE DIVISION SHALL DEVELOP AN INFORMATIONAL PAMPHLET TO BE DISTRIB-
10 UTED EITHER BY MAIL OR ELECTRONICALLY TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS WHICH PROVIDES
11 A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM INCLUDING ITS PURPOSE AND HOW TO
12 PARTICIPATE. THE DIVISION SHALL, FROM ITS AVAILABLE RESOURCES INCLUDING
13 ASSISTANCE FROM ORGANIZED VETERANS GROUPS, APPOINT AND CREATE A LISTING
14 OF VETERAN SPEAKERS COORDINATORS FOR EACH COUNTY OF THE STATE WHO SHALL
15 BE LISTED IN THE INFORMATIONAL PAMPHLET. THE VETERAN SPEAKERS COORDINA-
16 TORS' DUTIES SHALL INCLUDE BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO CONTACTING VETERANS WHO
17 RESIDE IN THEIR COUNTY INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE
18 VETERAN'S ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM AT THE NEW YORK STATE MILITARY MUSEUM OR
19 THE WEST POINT ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OR THE VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT OF
20 THE AMERICAN FOLKLORE CENTER OR ANY SIMILAR ORAL HISTORY PROJECT WITH
21 INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PROGRAM AND INQUIRING AS TO WHETHER SUCH PERSONS
22 WOULD BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE AS SPEAKERS OR IN ANY OTHER CAPACITY.
23 THE LISTING SHALL INCLUDE THE NAMES AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR SUCH
24 VETERANS INCLUDING INFORMATION DESCRIBING THE TYPE OF MILITARY SERVICE
25 PERFORMED BY EACH SUCH PERSON, THE TIME AND LENGTH OF SERVICE, GEOGRAPH-
26 IC AREA OR AREAS WHERE SUCH PERSON SERVED AND RANK. THE DIVISION AND THE
27 VETERAN SPEAKERS COORDINATORS SHALL ANNUALLY UPDATE SUCH INFORMATION
28 REGARDING THE AVAILABILITY OF SUCH VETERANS.

29 3. NO TEACHER OR VETERAN SHALL BE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS
30 PROGRAM. ANY TEACHER WHO WISHES TO SUPPLEMENT HIS OR HER CLASSROOM
31 INSTRUCTION CONCERNING A PARTICULAR ERA IN AMERICAN MILITARY HISTORY MAY
32 CONTACT A PARTICIPATING VETERAN PERSONALLY TO REQUEST THAT SUCH PERSON
33 VISIT A CLASSROOM TO DISCUSS HIS OR HER MILITARY EXPERIENCE. A TEACHER
34 SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASCERTAINING THE APPROPRIATENESS OF ANY
35 PROPOSED SPEAKER BASED UPON THE AGE OF THE CHILDREN AND THE INTENDED
36 SUBJECT MATTER. NOTHING IN THIS SECTION SHALL BE INTENDED TO SUPERSEDE
37 ANY PARTICULAR OR GENERAL SCHOOL RULES OR REGULATIONS OR OTHER LAWS
38 RELATING TO CURRICULUM.

39 4. THE DIVISION SHALL REQUIRE A CERTIFIED COPY OF THE VETERAN'S
40 DISCHARGE PAPERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE VETERAN SPEAKER PROGRAM. SUCH
41 FORM SHALL BE FILED WITH THE DIVISION TO SERVE AS EVIDENCE THAT SUCH
42 PERSON IS A VETERAN WHO SERVED IN THE UNITED STATES MILITARY HONORABLY.

43 5. THE DIVISION SHALL IMPLEMENT A PROCEDURE FOR EVALUATIONS OF EACH
44 SPEAKER TO BE COMPLETED BY TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, AND MAINTAIN SUCH
45 EVALUATIONS AND MAKE THEM AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST TO OTHER TEACHERS WHO
46 PLAN TO PARTICIPATE.

47 6. THE DIVISION MAY CONSULT WITH OTHER VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS AND ANY
48 BRANCH OF THE U.S. MILITARY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PROGRAM.

49 S 3. This act shall take effect one year after it shall have become a
50 law, provided that any rules and regulations necessary for the implemen-
51 tation of this act on its effective date shall be promulgated on or
52 before such date.