# STATE OF NEW YORK

11601

# IN ASSEMBLY

June 5, 2026

Introduced by COMMITTEE ON RULES -- (at request of M. of A. Blumencranz) -- read once and referred to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing a veterans remembrance civic engagement requirement for graduation from public high schools in New York state

**The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:**

Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "never forgotten act".

§ 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 320 to read as follows:

**§ 320. Veterans remembrance civic engagement requirement. 1. (a) Beginning with students entering the ninth grade in the two thousand twenty-seven--two thousand twenty-eight academic year, each student enrolled in a public high school within the state shall, as a condition of graduation, complete a veterans remembrance civic engagement requirement.**

**(b) The requirement shall consist of participation in at least one approved activity designed to honor, preserve, or maintain the memory of deceased veterans of the armed forces of the United States.**

**2. Approved activities shall include, but not be limited to:**

**(a) The care, cleaning, beautification, or maintenance of a veteran's gravesite located within:**

**(i) a municipal, county, religious, or private cemetery located in New York state;**

**(ii) the New York state veterans cemetery; and**

**(iii) a cemetery administered by the United States department of veterans affairs or the national cemetery administration;**

**(b) Placement of flags, flowers, wreaths, or commemorative markers at veterans' gravesites during approved remembrance events;**

**(c) Participation in organized veterans cemetery stewardship programs approved by the commissioner;**

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

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(d) Researching and presenting the life story, military service, or historical contributions of a deceased veteran associated with a gravesite maintained by the student; and

(e) Participation in memorial restoration, veterans remembrance ceremonies, or approved civic education projects relating to military service and sacrifice.

3. The commissioner shall require that participating students receive instruction concerning:

(a) the historical significance of military service;

(b) civic duty and citizenship;

(c) the sacrifices of veterans and fallen service members; and

(d) respectful treatment of veterans' memorials and burial sites.

4. School districts are authorized and encouraged to establish partnerships with:

(a) veterans service organizations;

(b) local American Legion posts;

(c) local Veterans of Foreign Wars posts;

(d) cemetery associations;

(e) county veterans service agencies;

(f) the New York state department of veterans' services;

(g) the United States department of veterans affairs; and

(h) other nonprofit organizations engaged in veterans remembrance and memorial preservation.

5. (a) Students with disabilities, medical limitations, religious objections, or other documented hardships preventing participation in physical gravesite stewardship shall be provided reasonable accommodations or alternative remembrance projects.

(b) Alternative projects may include oral histories with veterans, memorial research, digital remembrance projects, or other activities approved by the commissioner.

6. (a) No student shall be required to incur personal expense as a condition of satisfying this requirement.

(b) School districts shall make reasonable efforts to ensure equitable access to approved opportunities.

7. The commissioner, in consultation with the New York state department of veterans' services, shall promulgate regulations necessary for implementation of this section, including standards for participation verification and approved activities.

§ 3. The commissioner of education, in consultation with the New York state department of veterans' services, shall develop guidance materials and implementation recommendations for school districts no later than one year after the effective date of this act.

§ 4. Nothing in this act shall be construed to prohibit school districts from exceeding the minimum requirements established herein through expanded civic engagement or veterans remembrance programs.

§ 5. This act shall take effect immediately.