

STATE OF NEW YORK

791

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

(Prefiled)

January 8, 2025

Introduced by Sen. FERNANDEZ -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Rules

AN ACT to amend the veterans' services law, in relation to the Alex R. Jimenez New York state military immigrant family legacy program

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

1 Section 1. Section 29-b of the veterans' services law, as added by a
2 chapter of the laws of 2024 amending the veterans' services law, the
3 military law, and the executive law relating to establishing the Alex R.
4 Jimenez New York state military immigrant family legacy program, as
5 proposed in legislative bills numbers S. 8119-C and A. 8837-C, is renum-
6 bered section 29-d and is amended to read as follows:

7 § 29-d. Staff sergeant Alex R. Jimenez New York state military immi-
8 grant family legacy program. 1. For the purposes of this section, the
9 following terms shall have the following meanings:

10 (a) "Uniformed service member" shall mean a member of the army, navy,
11 air force, space force, marine corps, coast guard, public health service
12 commissioned corps, or national oceanic and atmospheric administration
13 commissioned officer corps serving on active duty.

14 (b) "The program" shall mean the staff sergeant Alex R. Jimenez mili-
15 tary immigrant family legacy program.

16 (c) "Liaison" shall mean an employee of the office for new Americans
17 designated by the director of the office for new Americans, an employee
18 of the division of military and naval affairs designated by the adjutant
19 general, ~~[ex]~~ and an employee of the department designated by the
20 commissioner, to serve as a military immigrant family legacy program
21 liaison pursuant to subdivision three of this section.

22 (d) "Veteran" shall have the same meaning as such term is defined in
23 section one of this article and shall also include any veteran with a
24 qualifying condition, as defined in section one of this article, and has

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

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1 received a discharge other than bad conduct or dishonorable from such
2 service, or is a discharged LGBT veteran, as defined in section one of
3 this article, and has received a discharge other than bad conduct or
4 dishonorable from such service.

5 (e) "Intended recipients" shall mean uniformed service members, veter-
6 ans, reserve component members and their [~~family members~~] spouse, domes-
7 tic partner, mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, mother through
8 adoption, father through adoption, or children, stepchildren, or adopted
9 children. The term "intended recipients" shall also include the next-of-
10 kin of an eligible uniformed service member, veteran or reserve compo-
11 nent member who died as a result of injury or disease incurred in or
12 aggravated by their service in the uniformed services, making a request
13 for the grant of posthumous U.S. citizenship on behalf of such
14 uniformed service member, veteran or reserve component member.

15 (f) "Reserve component members" shall mean those serving in the army
16 reserve, navy reserve, marine corps reserve, the army national guard,
17 the air national guard, or reserve corps of the public health service
18 during the time the unit was federally recognized as a reserve compo-
19 nent.

20 2. There is hereby established within the office for new Americans the
21 staff sergeant Alex R. Jimenez New York state military immigrant family
22 legacy program. The commissioner and adjutant general shall designate
23 one or more staff as liaisons to the office for new Americans who shall
24 refer any intended recipient[~~, alive or deceased,~~] in need of assistance
25 with an immigration matter to the office for new Americans. The office
26 for new Americans shall designate one or more staff to be liaisons with
27 the department and the division of military and naval affairs who shall
28 [~~receive and~~] coordinate such referrals from the department and the
29 division of military and naval affairs and [~~secure legal assistance~~
30 ~~under existing office for new Americans legal services for intended~~
31 ~~recipients~~] ensure the intended recipient is referred to existing office
32 for new Americans programs, including, but not limited to, immigration
33 legal service programs delivered by partnering community organization
34 and immigration counsel. The primary purpose of the program shall be to
35 assist intended recipients to secure legal immigration status in the
36 United States, including but not limited to, citizenship.

37 3. The [~~duties of the liaisons at the~~] office for new Americans shall
38 [~~include~~] have the responsibility to:

39 (a) [~~assisting~~] refer intended recipients[~~, who may qualify for~~
40 ~~adjustment of status, special immigration status through the federal~~
41 ~~Parole in Place program authorized by section 1758 of the 2020 National~~
42 ~~Defense Authorization Act, or any other sort of immigration relief,~~
43 ~~including relief that can lead to citizenship, in securing legal repre-~~
44 ~~sentation or consultation by qualified immigration attorneys or duly~~
45 ~~authorized board of immigration appeals representatives as may be neces-~~
46 ~~sary to obtain such relief~~] in matters related to immigration status, to
47 service providers.

48 (b) [~~serving~~] serve as liaison [~~between~~] for the department and the
49 division of military and naval affairs, [~~the United States citizenship~~
50 ~~and immigration services, the United States immigration and customs~~
51 ~~enforcement, the United States department of veterans affairs, the~~
52 ~~United States department of defense,~~] local veterans' service agencies,
53 state agencies, community groups, advocates, and other veterans and
54 military organizations and interested parties for the purpose of coordi-
55 nating efforts to provide access to immigration [~~relief~~] services to
56 intended recipients as specified in paragraph (a) of this subdivision.

1 (c) [~~consulting with qualified immigration attorneys or duly author-~~
 2 ~~ized board of immigration appeals approved representatives to facilitate~~
 3 ~~such coordination with the United States citizenship and immigration~~
 4 ~~services or other appropriate agency.~~

5 ~~(d) advocating for intended recipients.~~

6 ~~(e) developing and maintaining a clearinghouse for]~~ maintain a toll-
 7 free, multi-lingual hotline and website for purposes including, but not
 8 limited to, disseminating information and resources relating to the
 9 program as well as other federal, state, local and non-profit programs
 10 that may offer assistance to intended recipients in immigration matters.

11 [~~(f) promoting events and activities that educate and assist intended~~
 12 ~~recipients, including but not limited to, veteran human rights confer-~~
 13 ~~ences, veterans benefit and resources events.~~

14 ~~(g) developing information to be made available to]~~

15 (d) coordinate with the department and the division of military and
 16 naval affairs and otherwise marshal the resources of the state to serve
 17 the needs of intended recipients.

18 (e) share information about the program with congressionally chartered
 19 veterans' organizations, and local veterans' service agencies [~~to~~
 20 ~~provide a general overview of the program, including but not limited to,~~
 21 ~~its purpose and the eligibility requirements for adjustment of status,~~
 22 ~~citizenship, or any other form of available relief.~~

23 ~~(h) preparing yearly reports on topics, including but not limited to,~~
 24 ~~the demographics of intended recipients residing in the state, including~~
 25 ~~the number of such intended recipients by county, an estimate of how~~
 26 ~~many may be eligible for naturalization, and the unique needs of the~~
 27 ~~intended recipients within New York state to the commissioner, the adju-~~
 28 ~~tant general of the division of military and naval affairs and the~~
 29 ~~office for new Americans].~~

30 4. The liaisons appointed pursuant to subdivision two of this section
 31 shall jointly [~~submit a~~] report the number of intended recipients
 32 referred to the office for new Americans through the program to the
 33 commissioner[, ~~the adjutant general and the director of the office for~~
 34 ~~new Americans~~] on January first each year following the first full year
 35 after the effective date of this section. [~~Such report shall include,~~
 36 ~~but not be limited to, a description and evaluation of the program and~~
 37 ~~the liaisons' activities for the preceding calendar year, and the number~~
 38 ~~of intended recipients aided by the program, as well as any recommenda-~~
 39 ~~tions for future programmatic changes.~~] The [~~director of the office for~~
 40 ~~new Americans~~] commissioner shall submit the report to the governor and
 41 the legislature [~~in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (n) of~~
 42 ~~subdivision five of section ninety four b of the executive law~~] by March
 43 first of each year.

44 5. For the purposes of this program, personally identifying informa-
 45 tion provided by intended recipients shall not be retained, disclosed,
 46 disseminated, or otherwise published or made available by the depart-
 47 ment, the division of military and naval affairs, or the office for new
 48 Americans.

49 § 2. This act shall take effect on the same date and in the same
 50 manner as a chapter of the laws of 2024 amending the veterans' services
 51 law, the military law, and the executive law relating to establishing
 52 the Alex R. Jimenez New York state military immigrant family legacy
 53 program, as proposed in legislative bills numbers S. 8119-C and A.
 54 8837-C, takes effect.