

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:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LBD16051-01-6

1 (d) Researching and presenting the life story, military service, or
2 historical contributions of a deceased veteran associated with a graves-
3 ite maintained by the student; and

4 (e) Participation in memorial restoration, veterans remembrance cere-
5 monies, or approved civic education projects relating to military
6 service and sacrifice.

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

9 (a) the historical significance of military service;

10 (b) civic duty and citizenship;

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

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

13 4. School districts are authorized and encouraged to establish part-
14 nerships with:

15 (a) veterans service organizations;

16 (b) local American Legion posts;

17 (c) local Veterans of Foreign Wars posts;

18 (d) cemetery associations;

19 (e) county veterans service agencies;

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

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

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

24 5. (a) Students with disabilities, medical limitations, religious
25 objections, or other documented hardships preventing participation in
26 physical gravesite stewardship shall be provided reasonable accommo-
27 modations or alternative remembrance projects.

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

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

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

35 7. The commissioner, in consultation with the New York state depart-
36 ment of veterans' services, shall promulgate regulations necessary for
37 implementation of this section, including standards for participation
38 verification and approved activities.

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

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

46 § 5. This act shall take effect immediately.