

Assemblyman
Michael Cusick
Reports to

November 2013

NEW YORK VETERANS



Assemblyman Cusick is an avid supporter of the United States military and military veterans, and considers it a privilege to represent Staten Island veterans in Albany. A member of the Assembly Veterans' Affairs committee since 2003, Assemblyman Cusick has shown immense dedication to the well-being of veterans and their families. He has introduced numerous bills which benefit veterans, many which have become law. To access legislation, updates, and Assemblyman Cusick's website, please visit www.assembly.state.ny.us.

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 in Staten Island. This discount program gives veterans reductions on goods and services at participating businesses. To show gratitude to local veterans, he implemented this program which has been in effect for close to three years.



Staten Island veterans who are interested in the program are asked to sign up at Assemblyman Cusick's office (1911 Richmond Ave., 718-370-1384). Bring your discharge papers (DD-214) to receive the Staten Island VETS card. This card gives access to discounts at local businesses who have signed up for the program. Veterans receive a listing of participating businesses that offer discounts at their establishments. Assemblyman Cusick's office provides the local VFW, American Legion and public libraries with updated lists as new businesses join the program throughout the year.

1911 Richmond Avenue • Staten Island, NY 10314 • 718-370-1384
Room 724, LOB • Albany, NY 12248 • 518-455-5526 • cusickm@assembly.state.ny.us

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.



VETERAN DISTINCTION ON NYS DRIVER'S LICENSES NOW AVAILABLE

Residents who are military veterans can now apply for a special designation on their New York State driver's license when they apply for a license renewal.

If you are a qualified U.S. military veteran, who was honorably discharged, and you have a NYS driver's license, learner permit or non-driver photo ID card, you can have the word "Veteran" printed on the upper left corner of your photo document.

In order to obtain this status from the DMV, applicants must mark the appropriate box on the application form (MV-44 or MV-2) and show their original Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD-214) which states either "Honorable" or "Under Honorable Conditions" in the "Character of Service" section. Eligible veterans who request to have this status from the DMV will have the word "Veteran" printed on the upper left corner of their newly issued driver license, permit or non-driver ID. There are no additional fees for qualified veterans to receive the status on their driver license or non-driver ID. However, the regular fees for an original license or non-driver ID, a license or non-driver ID renewal or a duplicate driver license or non-driver ID still apply. Applicants may apply either through the mail at renewal time (a photocopy of the DD-214 form is acceptable) or by visiting their local DMV office for a renewal or replacement document. The licenses cannot be ordered by phone or online.

"This measure, which I proudly supported in the New York State Assembly, eliminates the need to carry separate documentation to prove that you are a veteran of the United States Armed Forces," said Assemblyman Cusick.

For more information on the veterans' status option, visit the DMV website at <http://www.dmv.ny.gov/armedforces.htm#vetstat>.

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

Qualified veterans living in a private house, condominium, or cooperative apartment who served during specific periods of conflict in the armed forces during one of the following: Persian Gulf Conflict (beginning Aug. 2, 1990), Vietnam War (Feb. 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975), Korean War (June 27, 1950 to Jan. 31, 1955), World War II (Dec. 7, 1941 to Dec. 31, 1946) are eligible for a property tax exemption.

Other owners who are eligible: wife or husband of a qualified veteran, surviving spouse of a qualified veteran (who has not remarried), and Gold Star parents. For more information and to register visit the Department's website at <http://www.tax.ny.gov> or by calling 518-457-2036.

All homeowners who receive the Basic STAR exemption for school property taxes must follow new registration requirements in order to continue receiving the Basic STAR property tax exemption. The registration period began August 15, 2013 and is open through December 31, 2013. The new registration process is part of an initiative against fraudulent STAR exemptions. Homeowners are only required to register once and will not have to re-register each successive year they claim the exemption. Senior citizens who receive Enhanced STAR are not impacted by the new registration requirements. For more information and to register visit the Department's website at <http://www.tax.ny.gov> or by calling 518-457-2036.

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLE CUSTOM PLATES FOR MILITARY AND VETERANS

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.

WHERE TO GET ASSISTANCE

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: 1-888-838-7697

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

www.va.gov

1-800-827-1000

Health Care Benefits

1-877-222-8387

Veterans' Affairs Benefits

1-800-827-1000

Women Veterans Call Center

1-855-829-6636

Combat Call Center

1-877-927-8387

Education (GI Bill)

1-888-442-4551

New York State Division of Veterans' Affairs

Borough Hall Building, Room 313

10 Richmond Terrace

Staten Island, NY 10301

Contact Telephone: (718) 447-8787

Veterans Health Center

Healthcare for Disabled Veterans

1150 South Avenue, 3rd Floor – Suite 301

Staten Island, NY 10314

Contact Telephone: 718-761-2973

Staten Island Vet Center

60 Bay Street

Staten Island, NY 10301

Phone: 718-816-4499 or 1-877-927-8387

Richmond County Senior Services

500 Jewett Avenue

Staten Island, NY 10302

Contact Telephone: (718)-816-1811

Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-8255 (Press 1)

☒ Text to 838255 to Get Help NOW

Help for Alcohol, Drug Abuse or Problem Gambling

1-877-846-7369

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>.

