

Government Affairs Report

March 11, 2018

New Jersey Legislative Update

There is a lot going on since the first of the year.

I have compiled a list of the veterans' legislation that was passed in New Jersey in the 2016-2017 session. Of the 9,908 bills that were introduced, 509 dealt with matters of concern for members of the military, veterans and their dependents. 40 bills were signed into law. Due to the fact that that most bills require an introduction in both chambers the count would be 80. That works out to 5% of the bills introduced dealt with military and veterans affairs legislation. Of that 5%, only 15.7% of the bills were passed. So out of all of the bills introduced, military and veterans affairs bills that were passed amounted to 8/10ths of one percent of the total number that were introduced. That my friends is a very poor number.

And for what it is worth, another 80 bills had at least a hearing in one committee. Some even were voted on in one chamber, but did not make it all the way through the process. So if one is feeling generous they can argue that a little over 31 percent of the military and veterans affairs bills got some activity. Less than 1/3 is still a poor number.

I have a list of all the veterans' legislation from the 2016-2017 session.

I have a list of what was signed into law.

I have also compiled a list of the 80 bills that received at least a hearing in a committee in one of the chambers.

Anyone want a list, please contact me via remcnultysr@yahoo.com and I will email you any list of your desire.

Veterans Executive Legislative Action Council

The veteran community was represented by the leadership from a host of NJ veterans service organizations when we gathered out front of the State House Annex to sign a letter that was approved, signed and distributed to our 120 legislators outlining our concerns with the proposal to divide the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. If you would like a copy of the letter that was sent, send me an email saying so.

VELAC, the Veterans Executive Legislative Action Council has been expanded to include the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the DAV, who were the original members, along with the VVA New Jersey State Council, the Jewish War Veterans, the Fleet Reserve Association, the Military Order of the Purple Hearts, the Catholic War Veterans and the Marine Corp League.

The intention is to have these veterans' service organizations work closely together to present a unified front in addressing the proposal to split DMAVA, to work together on veterans' legislation in NJ, to address veterans housing concerns, to increase outreach to the veteran community, to support efforts to improve access to healthcare (especially for our women veterans), to increase efforts in creating job opportunities for veterans, to expand education opportunities for our veterans, to improve the quality of life for our veterans and to provide additional benefits for our veterans.

It will take some time to get everyone on board and we will be establishing quarterly meetings. The potential to combine forces, share resources and create a larger presence in the veteran community as we deal with our elected officials at all levels is the driving force behind this effort. We have a lot of talented individuals in our respective organizations who, through working together, can strengthen our efforts and then take our work back to our respective service organizations where our members can become part of the force multiplier taking our concerns to our members, members of the public and our elected officials.

Report of the Military and Veteran Affairs Transition Advisory Committee

January 26, 2018 the Report of the Military and Veteran Affairs Transition Advisory Committee was released. If you would like a copy, send an email request or go to -

http://nj.gov/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml VELAC is going to be working to improve the sections that we think can be improved, we are going to contest the sections we may not agree with and we are going to do our best to represent our membership going forward. Some of the ideas in the report were formulated in July of 2016 and yet no one saw fit to reach out to the veteran community for our input or concerns. At first it appeared to be some campaign thoughts. Then it appeared again in October 2017. Still the veteran community was not contacted or asked to review what was being developed. When word came out that there was actually an effort to split DMAVA the veteran community expressed our concerns. It appeared as though no one took the veteran community seriously. When a letter was proposed and a gathering to sign it on the steps of the state capital was announced; there were some calls from individuals on the transition team to not do so. Still, the transition team did not share any information. There were efforts to convene a meeting to short-circuit the gathering on the steps, however there was not enough time reach out to members of the veteran community to issue a cancellation. For a month afterwards there was still no effort to reach out to have a meeting to discuss our concerns. The governor did hold a meeting with some individuals on January 26, 2018 when the report was finally released. It would have been ideal to share our input before the report went to print. Unfortunately the transition team apparently thought otherwise. So moving forward, this could become a little uncomfortable for some.

New Committee Members

As we move ahead into the current legislative session (2018-2019), there are some new faces in the Assembly and Senate Military and Veterans Affairs committees.

Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Chairman Patrick Diegnan (District 18) is new to the committee.

Vice Chairman Jeff Van Drew (District 1) continues to serve on the committee.

Christopher Connors (District 9) continues to serve on the committee.

Joseph Pennacchio (District 26) is new to the committee.

Troy Singleton (District 7) is new to the committee.

Assembly Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Chairwoman Cleopatra Tucker (District 28) continues to serve as chairwoman.

Vice Chairman Wayne DeAngelo (District 14) continues to serve as vice chairman.

Assemblyman Andrzejczak (District 1) continues to serve on the committee.

Assemblyman John Armato (District 2) is new to the committee.

Assemblyman Ronald Dancer (District 12) is new to the committee.

Assemblywoman DiAnne Gove (District 9) continues to serve on the committee.

Of course there are new faces on other committees in both chambers also. There are four new Senators and eight new members of the Assembly and one vacancy to fill yet in the Assembly.

Last session a lot of good veterans' legislation got left behind. One way we can improve on that situation is to communicate more effectively with our elected officials. That means letters, emails or personal visits to share our concerns with those we elect to represent us. Sometimes that will mean reaching out to our elected officials, other times it will mean reaching out to committee members and committee leaders. And there will be times when it will be prudent to reach out to the Speaker of the General Assembly or the Senate President.

Under ideal conditions, it would be great to have at least one person in every post, chapter or branch responsible for legislative activities. The more contact we have with our elected officials, the more likely they will respond to our requests.

There are 6,175 bills introduced in Trenton as of March 8 2018. 110 deal with veterans affairs, 84 deal with military matters. There will be many more before this session is over in early January 2020.

Legislation For Disabled Veterans Finally Becomes Law

Legislation authorizing veterans property tax exemption for totally disabled veterans who did not serve in theater of war was finally passed in both chambers and signed into law as P.L.2017, c.367 January 16, 2018. It has been an ongoing effort for nine years. Fortunately some of the same Senators and members of the General Assembly continued their efforts to bring the effort to pass this bill to fruition.

This legislation was first introduced January 13, 2009 and referred to the Senate Law and Public Safety and Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee.

March 7, 2014 the legislation was referred to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.

Cost estimates of this legislation developed by the Office of Legislative Services (OLS). Estimates indicated the local revenue loss for Fiscal Year 2010 would be \$8.550 million increasing to \$8.892 million in FY 2011 and \$9.248 million in FY 2012.

In 2017 OLS increased their estimates:

| Fiscal Impact | <u>Year 1</u> | <u>Year 2</u> | <u>Year 3</u> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| School Revenue | \$34.7 million | \$35.4 million | \$36.1 million |
| Municipal Revenue | \$19.6 million | \$20.0 million | \$20.4 million |
| County Revenue | \$12.0 million | \$12.2 million | \$12.4 million |
| <i>Total Revenue Loss</i> | <i>\$66.3 million</i> | <i>\$67.6 millon</i> | <i>\$68.9 million</i> |

Here is the history for A3150 in the 2016-2017 session:

2/22/2016 introduced, referred to Assembly State and Local Government Committee.

5/19/2016 reported and referred to Assembly Appropriations Committee.

1/30/2017 reported out of Assembly Appropriations Committee with Amendments, 2nd Reading.

6/22/2017 passed by the Assembly (75-0-0)

6/22/2017 received in the Senate, referred to Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.

1/5/2018 reported from Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee, 2nd Reading.

1/8/2018 substituted for S1622 (1R)

1/8/2018 passed Senate (passed both Houses) (37-0)

1/16/2018 Approved P.L.2017, c.367.

Under current law, service in a foreign country, on board a ship or naval vessel, or in foreign airspace is required with respect to service in the conflicts that did not reach the status of “war,” thereby rendering ineligible for the property tax exemption those veterans who became 100% disabled as the result of their service, but who did not serve in the “theater of war.” This bill allows veterans who became 100% disabled as the result of their service during conflicts, but who did not serve in the “theater of war,” to receive the property tax exemption.

The bill provides that for the purpose of eligibility for the property tax exemption, there shall be no minimum length of continuous or aggregate service required in any foreign country, on board any ship or naval vessel, or in any foreign airspace; and there shall be no requirement that the service-connected disability suffered by a veteran shall have occurred during any service in any foreign country, on board any ship or naval vessel, or in any foreign airspace.

The Office of Legislative Services estimates that this bill will result in potential property tax revenue losses to local units of up to \$67.4 million in calendar year 2018, \$68.7 million in calendar year 2019, and \$70.1 million in calendar year 2020. However, local government revenue would decrease only if tax rates are not adjusted to compensate for newly granted exemptions. The impact on individual local units will vary based on the number of newly qualified 100% disabled veterans and surviving spouses living in a municipality and the amount of property taxes levied on their homes.

Up to 7,600 disabled veterans may be eligible to apply for a property tax exemption. It is likely that this pool of potential applicants is smaller because not all disabled veterans will meet all program requirements (i.e., lack of homeownership or lack of required disability rating).

The estimated Statewide revenue loss for calendar year 2018 represents about one quarter of one percent of the total property tax levy for 2017.

Hearings in Trenton

Thursday, January 25, 2018 the Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee met. Initially they were scheduled to hear only three bills. One bill was pulled from the agenda. After the meeting agenda was finished, I welcomed the new members to the committee and indicated my disappointment that only three bills were initially posted with only two being heard. There were over a dozen bills listed for committee action, although I should note the dozen contained two bills that were previously passed and signed into law the last session.

S73 Provides gross income tax credit to certain totally and permanently disabled veterans for rent constituting property taxes.

This bill provides a gross income tax credit to certain totally and permanently disabled veterans for rent constituting property taxes.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A.54:4-3.30, a citizen and resident, as well as a surviving spouse in certain circumstances, of this State who has been honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances, from active service, in time of war, in any branch of the Armed Forces of the United States, who has been declared by the United States Veterans Administration to have certain service-connected disabilities is eligible for a property tax exemption on the person's principal residence and the lot on which that residence is situated. However, a similar exemption does not exist for persons who occupy a unit of a residential rental property and pay rent.

In order to create parity between disabled veterans who own their principal residence and those disabled veterans who occupy a unit of a residential rental property, the bill provides a refundable gross income tax credit in an amount equal to rent constituting property taxes, as defined in section 2 of P.L.1996, c.60 (C.54A:3A-16), for those disabled veterans, or their spouses in certain circumstances, who rent or lease a unit of a residential property, as also defined in section 2 of P.L.1996, c.60 (C.54A:3A-16). For the purposes of this bill, rent constituting property taxes is considered to be 18 percent of the rent paid by the taxpayer for occupancy during the taxable year of a unit of residential rental property which the taxpayer occupies as a principal residence.

Lastly, the bill requires the Director of the Division of Taxation in the Department of the Treasury to make a separate application available for those disabled veterans who, pursuant to N.J.S.A.54A:2-4, are not subject to the gross income tax.

This bill was passed by the committee and referred to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.

S189 Requires Adjutant General to consider need for inpatient hospice care for admission to veterans' facilities; permits waiver of State residency requirement. This legislation was initially introduced 4/4/2013, referred to Assembly Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee. It was not considered for a hearing in any of the previous sessions (2012-2013, 2014-2015, 2016-2017).

This bill requires the Adjutant General to consider the need for inpatient hospice care of a veteran or disabled veteran when providing standards and procedures for application and determination of eligibility for admission to a veterans' facility. The bill also permits the Adjutant General to waive any State residency requirement that would prevent such a veteran or disabled veteran from admission to a veterans' facility in the State.

With the three homes operating at capacity with a waiting list for each home, it does not appear to be prudent to expand or otherwise allow residents from outside of New Jersey to utilize NJ facilities which are partially funded by NJ taxpayers. I reached out to the members of the committee to express this concern and the bill was pulled from the hearing.

Senator Chris Brown (District 2) was the only sponsor of this legislation in the Senate. He was a primary sponsor of this legislation in the General Assembly in the 3 last previous sessions. February 1, 2018 this bill was withdrawn from consideration.

SR11 Urges Congress support "Disabled Veterans Commissary and Exchange Store Benefits Act."

This House urges Congress to support the "Disabled Veterans Commissary and Exchange Store Benefits Act" by extending military commissary and exchange store privileges to veterans with a compensable service-connected disability and their dependents.

Online shopping access will be available to veterans who received an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions. The benefit will be available to members of the

National Guard and veterans of the United States Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard, as well as their Reserve components, who have a compensable service-connected disability. This benefit only permits the veterans to shop online commissaries, not at the physical commissaries located on bases.

There is currently no bill, "Disabled Veterans Commissary and Exchange Store Benefits Act." before Congress this session. There was a bill in the previous session.

H.R.1292 - Disabled Veterans Commissary and Exchange Store Benefits Act 114th Congress (2015-2016)

This bill permits a veteran with any compensable service-connected disability (and the veteran's dependents) to use commissary and exchange stores on the same basis as a member of the Armed Forces entitled to retired or retainer pay.

03/04/2015 introduced in House, referred to the House Committee on Armed Services.

08/13/2015 referred to the Subcommittee on Military Personnel.

In 2016 the Defense Department resale board approved a plan to open the exchange's online stores to all veterans. Those who are verified through a new site will have access to all of the online exchange stores, including AAFES, the Coast Guard Exchange, the Marine Corps Exchange and the Navy Exchange.

The verification site, VetVerify.org, asks users to input their first and last names, last four digits of their Social Security number, birth date, email address and service branch. Veterans will then be notified whether they are ineligible, are already eligible to shop, that they will be eligible on the official Nov. 11 launch date, or that they have been randomly selected to be a beta tester.

The new benefit is available to all honorably discharged veterans. The rule change does not allow the new veteran shoppers to use the exchange in person or shop at the commissary. It also does not include access to gasoline, tobacco or uniform sales.

Officials with the Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) said early shoppers will be given access on a rolling basis in an effort to make sure the system is ready when the benefit fully opens on Veterans Day. Although verification and shopping should be seamless, they said it is possible that beta users could experience some hiccups.

Products purchased through the exchanges are tax free, and a percentage of revenue benefits Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs.

About 13 million veterans qualify for the new benefit. Officials did not have an estimate for how many veterans are expected to shop the online exchanges after Veterans Day or how many will register early.

The Senate Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee reported favorably Senate Resolution No. 11, urging Congress to support the "Disabled Veterans Commissary and Exchange Store Benefits Act" by extending military commissary and exchange store privileges to veterans with a compensable service-connected disability and their dependents.

Online shopping access will be available to veterans who received an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions. The benefit will be available to members of the National Guard and veterans of the United States Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard, as well as their Reserve components, who have a compensable service-connected disability. This benefit

only permits the veterans to shop online commissaries, not at the physical commissaries located on bases.

The General Assembly Military and Veterans Affairs Committee met February 12, 2018. The following bills were acted on as noted.

A111 authorizes special Combat Action Badge license plate program. The bill was amended to include the "Marine Corps Combat Action Ribbon". The bill was reported favorably by the committee and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. Joseph Belardo, Commander NJ Military Order of the Purple Heart requested the amendment during his testimony.

A372, legislation that waives certain commercial driver license fees for veterans and spouses of veterans and A373, legislation that waives certain professional and occupational licensing fees for veterans and spouses of veterans were referred to the sponsor(s) for consideration for amending to include all veterans as set forth in New Jersey Statutes 40A:9-78.2 "Veteran" Defined: As used in this act, P.L.2012, c.30 (C. 40A:9-78.1 et seq.), "veteran" means a person who has served in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines or Coast Guard of the United States or a Reserve component thereof or the National Guard of this State as defined in section 1 of P.L.1963, c.109 (C. 38A:1-1), and has been honorably discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable from such service.

I asked for this action and since have followed up with a detailed position statement that I have shared with all the committee members and all of those who have sponsored or co-sponsored these two bills.

I also asked that these bills also include active service members, members of a Reserve component or National Guard members and their spouses if they reside in New Jersey. Committee Vice Chairman DeAngelo indicated he thought these servicemembers were covered under previous legislation. I checked Chapter Laws in New Jersey all the way back to 2000 and found no bills passed that would support the Assemblyman's contention. I also shared this info with the committee members and the sponsors/co-sponsors.

A837 requires public utility to charge veterans' organization residential rate for service delivered to property at which veterans' organization primarily operates.

As amended, this bill requires a public utility to charge a veterans' organization a residential rate for service delivered to the property at which the veterans' organization primarily operates, if the residential rate is lower than the commercial rate for service at that property. Under the bill, a public utility, in consultation with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, is to establish a reasonable procedure by which an organization may certify itself as a veterans' organization with the public utility for the purposes of this bill.

The committee amended the bill to change the tax-exempt status from 501(c)(3) to 501(c)(19) to focus on the organizations to be covered by the bill. 501(c)(19) tax-exempt status is for military and veteran organizations, these groups are the focus of the bill.

This bill was reported favorably out of the committee with amendments and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

I noted in my testimony that many veterans organizations allow free use of their facilities for meetings of other veterans' groups, meetings that serve community purposes, blood drives and other volunteer activities that benefit the community at large.

A2162 Allows person on police officer or firefighter eligible list who is unable to complete requirements for employment due to certain military service to have name placed on subsequent eligible list.

The purpose of this bill is to offer a second opportunity for employment to a member of the National Guard or the Reserves who could not accept a position as a police officer or firefighter because of service to the nation. It allows a person who previously passed or subsequently passes a civil service examination for the position of police officer or firefighter, but who was unable or is unable to complete any other requirements for employment because of active duty in the National Guard or the Reserves, to have the person's name placed in order by score on a subsequent eligible list (designated by the person) for the same type of position. This privilege would be available to Guardsmen and Reservists called to at least 30 days of continuous active duty after September 11, 2001 and prior to the termination of operation "Enduring Freedom." Any such person who met the maximum age requirement for a position at the announced closing date of the civil service examination on which the first list of eligibles is based will be deemed to have met such maximum age requirement on the date that the person's name is placed on a subsequent eligible list.

I noted in my testimony that it was not uncommon for members of the Reserve or Guard units to be called up unexpectedly for active duty to respond to the ever-changing challenges our military faces worldwide.

This bill was reported favorably by the committee and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AR97 Urges President and Congress of US to enact H.R. 500 which prevents IRS from collecting taxes on amount of student loan forgiven for deceased veterans.

As amended, this resolution urges the President and Congress of the United States to enact H.R.-500 which prevents the Internal Revenue Service from collecting taxes on any amount of student loan forgiven for deceased veterans.

Each member of the United States Armed Forces serves our country to protect the citizens of the United States and, in 2015, there were over one million active duty members of the Armed Forces. If a service member sustains an injury or illness while on active duty they may be discharged and return home to pursue higher educational opportunities. Many service members embrace the opportunity to pursue higher education through the various tuition assistance programs and college funds offered to service members, which may be used in combination with federal and private student loans to pay for the cost of college. If a service member loses his or her life as a result of an injury or illness sustained while on active duty, the federal education loans are forgiven under the Higher Education Act and private loan companies can choose to forgive the education loans.

When an educational loan is forgiven the Internal Revenue Code categorizes the amount of the loan as taxable gross income for a cosigner on the loan, which can include both family and friends of the deceased service member. Taxing loan forgiveness as income can be burdensome to family members and friends especially during a time when they are grieving the loss of their loved one. Families of veterans who lost their lives as a result of an illness or injury sustained while serving on active duty have already sacrificed so much for the United States.

The federal bill H.R. 500, named the "Andrew P. Carpenter Tax Act," would amend the Internal Revenue Code to prevent the Internal Revenue Service from collecting taxes on any amount of student loan forgiven. The federal bill will help to ease the financial burden for individuals who are already grieving for the loss of their loved one.

The committee amended the bill to update the congressional bill number for the current session. I pointed out in my testimony the need to update the bill number from H.R. 2874 to H.R. 500.

This bill was reported favorably out of the committee with amendments, 2nd reading.

I indicated I would be in Washington March 4-8th, 2018 and would share this with the elected members from New Jersey.

I noted in my testimony this matter has been introduced in the House two previous times. Never once has there been a co-sponsor of this legislation from New Jersey. It is time to get onboard with this legislation and get it passed. Our legislators were responsive to requests to support this legislation.

New Jersey Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee

March 5th, 2018 the committee favorably reported S129/S1025, legislation that excludes from gross income taxation military compensation for personnel serving outside of State and combat zone compensation. Legislation to exempt combat pay from the gross income tax was first introduced May 6th, 2004. Three previous times it reached the Senate Budget and Appropriations committee. Now we have to get it through the General Assembly and to the floors of both chambers for a vote. The Assembly bill number is A2451, it has been referred to the Assembly and Veterans Affairs committee.

Washington, D.C. Meetings

Earlier this month I was in Washington, D.C. where I met with Jake Gutman, Legislative Correspondent for Senator Booker (Senator Booker made a brief appearance during the meeting), Keith P. Roachford, Special Projects Director for Senator Menendez, Steven Schultz, Legislative Assistant and Legislative Correspondent for Congressman Donald Payne, Jr. The Congressman was able to join the meeting as we were wrapping up the session. I met with Yujin Lee, Legislative Assistant for Congresswoman Bonnie Watson-Coleman, Congressman Josh Gottheimer and Legislative Assistant Daniel Marrow, and Congressman Leonard Lance and his Deputy Chief of Staff John Byers. I also ran into Congressmen Norcross and Frelinghuysen and later attended the VFW Legislator of the Year presentation to the award winner Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen.

I thanked them for supporting various legislation they sponsored or cosponsored.

We discussed the ongoing problem of sequestration and continuing resolutions and the impact on readiness, delayed maintenance and modernization. I noted veterans were thankful for the two year authorization that has been determined to be useful, stressing that our goal is the complete elimination of sequestration. I indicated I did not think it is feasible to wait until this legislation sunsets in 2021.

I spoke about the ongoing problem of the VA not making prompt payments for non-VA provided health care that results with collection efforts being instituted against veterans. We spoke about needed improvements in how GYN healthcare providers are selected, indicating most women would prefer to be involved in the process so as to improve their level of comfort. We spoke about the problem of women veterans with children experiencing homelessness and the need to address this situation as the emergency that it is. I called for expanding the access to women-specific health care including hiring more VA health care professionals who are able to identify and treat the unique health care needs of women veterans.

I discussed improving VA health care in New Jersey, outlining a number of concerns and recommendations.

I spoke about S2193 - Caring for our Veterans Act of 2017, legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve health care for veterans, and for other purposes.

I spoke about the need to expand the caregivers program to include all veterans. I expressed concerns about comments recently expressed by VA Secretary Shulkin to limit the program to approximately 40, 000 veterans by instituting a tier determination that would eliminate 148,000 veterans from consideration for this benefit. I indicated there is no fallback position for veterans in this legislation. Every eligible veteran needs to receive this benefit when applicable.

I spoke about HR500 - Andrew P. Carpenter Tax Act, legislation that amends the Internal Revenue Code to exclude from gross income any amount attributable to the discharge of student loan indebtedness of a veteran who served on active duty and: (1) is deceased as a result of a service-connected death or disability, or (2) has a service-connected disability that the Department of Veterans Affairs has rated as total. I indicated that the members of the New Jersey General Assembly Military and Veterans Affairs committee requested that I convey their message that they would like to see this legislation passed

I spoke about the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs quest to see the creation of a Plot Interment Allowance for non-veteran spouses buried in State Veterans Cemeteries. Presently New Jersey pays for the burial of non-veteran spouses who are entitled to burial in the State Veterans Cemetery and receives no reimbursement whatsoever from any source. The allowance could be a smaller amount than the Plot Interment Allowance for Veterans but it would at least assist the States with cemetery operating expenses. Currently NJ DMAVA receives \$750.00 for each Veteran. We noted that there has not been a casketed burial in a Federal Veterans Cemetery since 1968 and that the NJ Veterans Cemetery along with many county veterans' cemeteries have been providing burials in New Jersey for veterans exclusively for 50 years.

I provided an update for the improvements planned and/or completed dealing with the capacity to provide increased health care in the Cape May, Atlantic and Cumberland County CBOCs. I thanked the staff members for the Senators for their continued support in this ongoing evolution.

I left behind printed materials outlining these and additional concerns.

Prepared by
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