



For over 200 years our veterans have gone to war to protect the United States and the freedoms we enjoy. Some have sacrificed their lives, some their health, and some a portion of their youth, often traveling to a distant country, to put themselves in harm's way so we can continue with our everyday lives risk-free.

As a member of the Connecticut General Assembly, we recognized the enormous sacrifices these men and women have made, particularly in the current war against Iraq. The soldiers fighting in this war have had to disrupt careers and families to serve. We have passed a number of new laws designed to honor, protect and reward these dedicated and patriotic men and women who put their lives on the line for all of us.

As you read this newsletter and learn more about these new laws, I hope you will take a moment to think about our servicemen and women who are serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as those who came before and those who will come after.

## Joseph C. Serra • Representing Middletown



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State Representative

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State Representative  
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# Veterans' Wrap Up

33rd District  
Serving Middletown

## National Guard Citizen-Soldiers Gain Right To Be Buried In State Cemeteries

Unanimously passing both chambers of the General Assembly, National Guardsmen who have served for at least 20 years now have the ability to be buried in any of the state's three veterans' cemeteries. Previously statutory language had kept members of the National Guard from having burial rights because they use a separate discharge document from that of their active duty/reservist counterparts. It is a fitting honor to bestow, especially in light of the fact that the Guard is the only military service that the Governor can muster into state service should the need arise.



## Gold Star Families

New legislation provides for the Department of Motor Vehicles to now offer a "Gold Star Family" license plate for families of fallen soldiers.

## Fraudulent Representation of Military Valor Awards

Newly implemented legislation will make it a crime to falsely represent oneself as having been awarded medals or ranks of military valor. Measures have passed that double the maximum penalties for impersonating a member of the armed forces. The measures also make it illegal to discriminate against someone because of membership in the armed forces.

## Service Bonus For Connecticut Guardsmen

In this last session, the General Assembly established a service bonus of \$50 a month for National Guardsmen called to active service, with a maximum of \$500. This bill also increases the bonus of \$50 a month to a maximum of \$1200, from the previous maximum of \$500, for Guardsmen deployed to a war zone, to recognize that many of our brave citizen soldiers are performing second tours in combat zones.



## Protecting The Careers Of Those Who Serve

New legislation enables members of the Armed Forces or National Guardsmen called to duty by the Governor to maintain certain professional licenses, certificates, permits and registrations while on duty by providing a one year grace period to renew from the time the member is discharged from active service.



## Honoring Our Fallen Heroes

It is now state law that protestors must stay 150 feet away from the entrance to a funeral location when making noise or creating diversions that aren't part of the ceremony. Protestors must stay 300 feet away if their presence impedes an entrance or exit. This crime is punishable by up to one year in prison, a fine of up to \$ 2,000, or both.



## State Employees Serving In Operation Jump Start Or Certain Other Operations

SB 1186 provides protections for state employees who are called to active military duty to support "Operation Jump Start" along the Mexican border. After thirty days of service, state employees will be able to receive the difference between their state pay and military pay. During their tour of duty, active employees will also be able to accrue sick time and vacation time, and if they choose, continue their state health insurance coverage.

