



MAY 12, 2014 Albany, NY

# **Governor Cuomo Signs Legislation to Create the Most Robust Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Procurement Program in the Nation**

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today signed the Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Act into law, establishing a six percent goal for participation on state contracts by these businesses in addition to other measures to support disabled veteran-owned companies.

The legislation creates the Division of Service Disabled Veterans Business Development within the Office of General Services which will oversee the program and certify eligible businesses. The federal government's goal for awarding contracts to veteran-owned businesses is only three percent and no other state in the nation offers as robust a program which includes set-aside contracts to these small businesses.

"Today New York is taking our commitment to honor the service and sacrifice of the disabled veterans who serve our state and nation to a higher level," Governor Cuomo said. "This new law sets an ambitious and aggressive goal to make businesses owned by disabled veterans a more active part of state contracting and gives our heroes the recognition that they truly deserve. We are proud to lead every state in the nation with this ambitious program and by doing so, continue New York's undaunted pursuit of greater fairness. I commend the members of the Legislature who worked so hard on this new law."

Senate Co-Leader Dean G. Skelos said, "By signing this legislation, Governor Cuomo allows New York State to take an extraordinary step forward, providing our heroes with the benefits, support and economic opportunities they need and deserve. I commend

Senator Ball, a leading voice for veterans all across this state, for his tireless and unrelenting work on this issue."

Senate Co-Leader Jeff Klein said, "This legislation demonstrates New York's commitment to our veterans by ensuring that our brave men and women can thrive in today's economy. I applaud Governor Cuomo for signing this into law so that our state continues to lead the nation in securing job opportunities for our veteran-owned businesses."

Speaker Sheldon Silver said, "Support for our veterans has always been a priority in the Assembly. We must never forget the sacrifices that they have made in service to our country. With this legislation, we are taking real, tangible action to create economic opportunities for veterans to thrive here in our great state. This is a measure of our gratitude to veterans for their defense of our great nation and the protection of our freedoms."

Senator Greg Ball said, "This single act will do more to reverse the high veteran unemployment rate than anything else we have done, or will do. Yet beyond just creating jobs, this is about saving lives, and confronting the epidemic of veteran suicide through meaningful employment. We have been fighting to establish this set aside for years and I want to sincerely thank Governor Cuomo for his support and for keeping his commitment to our heroes. Let it be clear that this is not a handout; this is an opportunity for both employee and employer. These men and women have the exact skill sets we need in the workplace and the integrity we desperately need in the board room. The same attributes that make these people so vital to defending our freedoms are the same hard earned intangibles that make them exceptional at running their businesses and creating jobs. This is what good people can accomplish when they forget the politics and just focus on doing the right thing. Bravo to all involved, bravo!"

Assembly Member Felix W. Ortiz said, "The enactment of this Veterans Contract program today, with its precedent setting goal of giving 6% of state contracts to service disabled veterans, will let New York's military personnel know that the sacrifices and contributions they made for our safety at home are recognized and appreciated. Giving our veterans increased economic opportunities as they make the transition back to civilian life is one

way we can repay our debt of gratitude to them. For these brave men and women who have returned home with same the spirit they so admirably carried in active duty, we can and should encourage their interest in running their own small businesses. Our veterans deserve this contract preference and I am proud to have been a sponsor of this legislation."

Every year, the State procures billions of dollars in goods and services for the benefit of the people of New York. The expansion of economic opportunity through the significant purchasing power of the State is but one way to thank service-disabled veterans for their honorable service to our country and to help reintegrate them back into the States economy.

Governor Cuomo has made job assistance for veterans a hallmark of his administration. His "Experience Counts" initiative translates veterans military skills and experiences into opportunities for employment, and his \$74 million tax credit encourages employers to hire New Yorks post-9/11 veterans who are currently unemployed.

New York is home to nearly 900,000 veterans, 72 percent of whom have served during periods of conflict.

Information about the program can be found at [veterans.ny.gov/business](http://veterans.ny.gov/business) including a contact form that businesses can use to begin the certification process and a list of frequently asked questions. Businesses can also contact OGS directly by calling 844-579-7570 or sending an email to [veteransdevelopment@ogs.ny.gov](mailto:veteransdevelopment@ogs.ny.gov).

OGS is actively recruiting for an Executive Director of Service-Disabled Veterans Business Development who will be responsible for developing and implementing a statewide strategic plan to promote participating businesses, including compliance monitoring. The Division will assist eligible businesses in obtaining proper certification and opportunities to participate in state procurements. Over the next 30 days, regulations and certification guidelines will be finalized and the new organization will be established.

OGS commissioner RoAnn Destito, said, "By signing this bill, Governor Cuomo has sent a

powerful message to our service-disabled veterans. If you have an eligible small business, New York State wants you to be our partner. I am honored that this Division will be housed at OGS and look forward to working with the Division of Veterans Affairs and Empire State Development to provide new opportunities for these deserving businesses."

Eric J. Hesse, director, New York State Division of Veterans Affairs, said, "Today's bill signing demonstrates Governor Cuomo's strong commitment to hard working veterans. This legislation will open doors for service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses and is a great opportunity for them to actively take part in some of the billions of dollars of state contracts that are awarded each year."

Daniel MacDonald, President & CEO, MacDonald Engineering, said, "I feel that New York has taken a great step to thank my fellow Veterans and to welcome us home. With this new legislation, we will have an opportunity to make sure that Veterans have good jobs to help them support their families. Thank you to Governor Cuomo, Senator Ball, Assemblyman Ortiz, and everyone else who worked so hard to make this happen."

Michael Pascal, State Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of New York, said, "On behalf of the more than 60,000 members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of New York, I want to thank Governor Cuomo for encouraging this legislation. It is great to see the leadership in the State taking the time to address and work on issues facing Veterans and military families. This bill creates great potential for service-disabled Veteran-owned businesses to work with the State. The Veterans of Foreign Wars stands ready to assist our leadership in getting Veterans the recognition that they have earned."

Ken Governor, State Commander, The American Legion, Department of New York, said, "As the largest Veterans Service Organization, The American Legion, Department of New York, is pleased the New York State enacted this legislation in support of Veterans disabled as a result of their military service."

Greg Rinckey, Esq., Managing Partner, Tully Rinckey PLLC, said, "New York State spends billions each year on goods and services. The 6% set-aside will make sure that money

stays right here in the Empire State, supporting service-disabled Veterans and encouraging investment in small businesses. It will open up additional opportunities that were previously just out of reach for Tully Rinckey PLLC and other service-disabled Veteran-owned small businesses like us. Other states, as well as those at the federal level, should take a hard look at what New York State is doing for Veterans and small businesses."