



Military & Veterans Issues

FROM STATE SENATOR ROBERT M. TOMLINSON

WINTER 2007

Dear Friend,

For decades our soldiers and veterans have fought to protect America from the threat of tyranny, oppression and terrorism. Because of their devotion to serving their country, we enjoy the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I supported several pieces of newly enacted legislation which are designed to enrich the lives of our soldiers and veterans, and recognize the challenges they face. I was especially pleased to push for a new law that will provide property tax exemptions to more disabled veterans.



Senator Robert M. Tomlinson

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If you have any questions about these programs, please feel free to contact one of my offices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert M. Tomlinson".

Robert M. Tomlinson

New Law Expands Property Tax Exemptions Available For Disabled Veterans

Many of Pennsylvania's brave veterans have suffered disabilities during the course of their service to our Commonwealth and our nation. In the past two legislative sessions I sponsored legislation that would expand a current state program that provides property tax exemptions to disabled veterans. I am pleased that Senate Bill 19, which I prime-sponsored was amended into a House Bill, which was signed into law.

Currently, Pennsylvania offers property tax exemptions for veterans who demonstrate financial need. The new Act 161 includes guidelines for determining need, in an effort to extend eligibility to a greater number of disabled veterans and ensure that applicants with the greatest financial need receive the benefit.

Under the new law, eligible applicants that earn up to \$75,000 are

presumed eligible to receive a property tax exemption. Applicants may be required to provide further proof of income to claim the exemption.

The new law also extends eligibility to disabled veterans who own their home with his or her spouse. Previously, a disabled veteran would only have been eligible if he or she was the sole owner of the property. In addition, the legislation will extend the time to review exemptions from two years to five years.

Our disabled veterans have made our nation proud through their incred-

ible courage and outstanding service, and I am proud that the General Assembly unanimously joined me in recognizing the sacrifices they made to preserve our freedom and way of life.

Sen. Tomlinson speaks about his bill to extend property tax exemptions to more disabled veterans during the Senate's Special Session on property tax reform.



Military Families Eligible for Assistance

Pennsylvania is home to thousands of soldiers who bravely defend our country and fight to protect our freedoms. These men and women make sacrifices every day for our great nation. Unfortunately, some of these soldiers have difficulty providing basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, medical care and shelter for themselves and their families.

To assist struggling service members and their families, I voted for legislation to create the Military Family Relief Assistance Program. The program is funded through annual voluntary contributions on Pennsylvania Personal Income Tax Forms.

Income tax forms will have a space for individuals to donate money to the fund.

Pennsylvania Personal Income Tax Forms will provide a check-off box giving individuals the opportunity to donate part of their tax return. The donation will be deducted directly from the individual's tax return.

Donations may also be made by check payable to MFRAP, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, and sent to:

**Military Family Relief
Assistance Program
Dept. of Military and Veterans
Affairs
Bldg S-0-47, Fort Indiantown Gap
Annville, PA 17003-5002**

The DMVA also plans to establish a web-based program to allow electronic donations in the future.

All donations to this program and other state programs are tax deductible

for federal income tax purposes.

Applicants must show a direct and immediate financial need as a result of the military service of the soldier. Circumstances that may qualify include:

- A sudden or unexpected loss of income related directly to military service;
- Travel and lodging expenses incurred by a service member due to a death or critical illness of a parent, spouse, sibling or child;
- Travel and lodging expenses incurred by family members while visiting a wounded soldier;
- Natural or manmade disasters resulting in the need for food, shelter or other necessities;
- Emergency need for child care.