



State of the State Address Fact Sheet: **Veterans' Tuition Coverage**

"In the name of all of those who have served on our behalf, I will send you a bill guaranteeing New York's returning combat veterans a tuition benefit that covers the full cost of SUNY or CUNY tuition and can to be used at any college or university in New York State."

-Governor Eliot Spitzer (January 9, 2008)

The Challenge

- We must do all we can to recognize the commitment and sacrifice of the nearly 40,000 New Yorkers currently serving in the armed forces.
- The State can play an important role in helping returning veterans pursue education and employment opportunities.
- The State has several tuition benefit programs for veterans and members of the National Guard, but they are limited by who they cover and how much they provide:
 - The Veterans' Tuition Award covers combat veterans who served overseas in the Vietnam, Afghanistan and Persian Gulf wars. However, the existing benefit provides just \$2,000 annually for full-time students and \$1,000 annually for part-time students who are eligible veteran attending a public, private college, or community college in New York State.
 - The Recruitment Retention and Incentive Program provides Active National Guard members and Guard members who have been deployed with the equivalent of full SUNY tuition at New York State colleges, universities, and community colleges, provided they enrolled in the program previous to deployment.
- SUNY's 2007-08 resident undergraduate annual tuition rate is \$4,350; CUNY's is \$4,000.

Our Approach

- The Governor will submit a bill guaranteeing New York's returning combat veterans a tuition benefit in the amount of the full cost of SUNY tuition to be used at any college or university in New York State.

Other Relevant Initiatives

- The Division of Veterans' Affairs is working to help soldiers separated involuntarily from the Army at Fort Drum – due to wounds and injuries sustained in combat – qualify for entry level State jobs under the guidelines of Civil Service Law §55c.

- The Division of State Police is working to maximize the number of military applicants by offering supplemental military exams for those on active duty during the normal testing period.