Committee on Veterans

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**THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

**COMMITTEE REPORT OF THE HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION**

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**COMMITTEE ON VETERANS**

Honorable Robert Holden, Chair

**May 4, 2022**

**Res. No. 21-2022:** By Council Members Dinowitz Yeger, Brooks-Powers and Menin

**TITLE:** Resolution reaffirming New York City's status as a Purple Heart City and calling on the State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign A.7961/S.2279, designating the State of New York a Purple Heart State

**Res. No. 41-2022:** By the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams) and Council Members Hanif, Yeger, Louis, Brooks-Powers, Dinowitz and Menin

**TITLE:** Resolution calling on Congress to pass, and the President to sign, legislation that allows service members, veterans and eligible surviving spouses to use the United States Department of Veteran Affairs home loans to purchase cooperative apartments

1. **INTRODUCTION**

 On May 4, 2022, the Committee on Veterans, chaired by Council Member Robert Holden, will hold a hearing on Resolution No. 21 of 2022, sponsored by Council Member Eric Dinowitz, to reaffirm New York City's status as a Purple Heart City and calling on the State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign A.7961/S.2279, designating the State of New York a Purple Heart State. In addition, the Committee will hear Resolution No. 41 of 2022, sponsored by the Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, calling on Congress to pass, and the President to sign, legislation that allows service members, veterans and eligible surviving spouses to use the United States Department of Veteran Affairs home loans to purchase cooperative apartments.

 These two resolutions were previously heard at a joint hearing of this Committee and the Committee on General Welfare held on April 4, 2022. At that hearing, the committees received testimony from the New York City Department of Veterans’ Services (DVS), the New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS), veteran service organizations, supportive housing and homeless services providers, advocates, veterans and other interested parties.

1. **ANALYSIS OF LEGISLATION**

 Resolution 21 of 2022 calls on the State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign A.7961/S.2279, designating the State of New York a Purple Heart State. The Purple Heart decoration is a solemn distinction and is presented to service members who have been wounded or killed while serving in the United States military. By adopting the Purple Heart designation on a statewide basis, New York State can take another critical step in ensuring our veterans are welcomed and respected.

Resolution 41 of 2022 calls on the United States Congress to pass, and the President to sign, legislation that would allow service members, veterans and eligible surviving spouses to use the home loans backed by the United States Department of Veteran Affairs to purchase cooperatively owned apartments, or co-ops. Currently, the VA loans cannot be used to purchase co-ops, which can pose a significant problem for veterans and military members looking to become homeowners in large cities, such as New York, where co-ops often account for a sizable share of housing.

Res. No. 21

..Title

Resolution reaffirming New York City’s status as a Purple Heart City and calling on the State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign A.7961/S.2279, designating the State of New York a Purple Heart State.

..Body

By Council Members Dinowitz, Yeger, Brooks-Powers and Menin

Whereas, According to the Military Order of the Purple Heart, an organization for combat wounded veterans, the Purple Heart Medal is the oldest and among the most venerated military decorations in present use; and

Whereas, The Purple Heart is awarded in the name of the President of the United States to those wounded or killed in combat by enemy action, or posthumously to their next of kin; and

Whereas, On August 7, 1782, during the Revolutionary War, General George Washington issued an order establishing a badge of distinction for meritorious action, which consisted of a heart made of purple cloth; and

Whereas, The award was notable because it was a way to honor brave soldiers in the lower ranks who fought under General Washington’s command for America’s independence at a time when only officers were eligible for decoration in European armies; and

Whereas, Although discontinued after the Revolutionary War, the decoration was reinstated by the Department of Defense in 1932; and

Whereas, Our nation's military leaders have awarded the Purple Heart to honor an estimated 1.8 million Americans who have been wounded in battle or killed in action; and

Whereas, New York City is home to 230,000 veterans, according to the New York City Department of Veteran Services; and

Whereas, In 2015, the New York City Council issued a proclamation declaring New York City a Purple Heart City; and

Whereas, S.2279, sponsored by Senator Daphne Jordan and its companion bill A.7961, sponsored by Assembly Member Jake Ashby, would designate the State of New York a Purple Heart State, recognizing the heroic sacrifices our nation’s soldiers have made in order to protect our country; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York reaffirms New York City’s status as a Purple Heart City and calls on the State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign A.7961/S.2279, designating the State of New York a Purple Heart State.

Session 12

AH

LS #6324/6980

02/16/2022

Session 11

EA

LS #18175

Res. #1838-2021

Res. No. 41

..Title

Resolution calling on Congress to pass, and the President to sign, legislation that allows service members, veterans and eligible surviving spouses to use the United States Department of Veteran Affairs home loans to purchase cooperative apartments.

..Body

By the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams) and Council Members Hanif, Yeger, Louis, Brooks-Powers, Dinowitz and Menin

Whereas, The United States Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) helps service members, veterans and eligible surviving spouses to become homeowners by offering a home loan; and

Whereas, Home loans offered by the VA, known as VA loans, are provided by private lenders such as banks and mortgage companies; and

Whereas, The VA guarantees a portion of the home loan, which enables the lender to provide favorable terms; and

Whereas, The New York Times published an article titled, “A Loan Program for Veterans Comes Wrapped in Red Tape”, on June 10, 2013, which identified obstacles to using the VA loan to purchase a condominium or cooperative apartment in New York; and

Whereas, The New York Times article highlights three challenges: 1) New York real estate firms have no experience with VA loans, 2) VA loans can only be used to purchase a condominium if the entire building applies to the VA for approval and 3) cooperative buildings are excluded from the VA loan program; and

Whereas, According to the National Association of Housing Cooperatives, more than 1.2 million families in the United States live in homes owned and operated through a cooperative association and most of these units are located in major urban areas such as Chicago, San Francisco and New York City; and

Whereas, Cooperative units are often a less expensive housing option when compared to condominium units or single-family houses; and

Whereas, Veterans seeking to find a home in New York City or other major urban areas should have similar home buying support as veterans who purchase homes in suburban or rural areas; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on Congress to pass, and the President to sign, legislation that allows service members, veterans and eligible surviving spouses to use the United States Department of Veteran Affairs home loans to purchase cooperative apartments.

Session 12

NLB

LS 1107

12/30/21

Session 11

JLC

LS# 6273