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[Home](#) > [Newsroom](#) > [Press Releases](#) > 2015

## Acting Governor Guadagno Calls for Support for Veterans at State VFW Convention

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**Trenton, NJ** - Acting Governor Kim Guadagno today recognized the commitment and sacrifice of New Jersey's servicemembers and veterans at the 96<sup>th</sup> Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Department of New Jersey State Convention in Wildwood.

In her remarks to the New Jersey VFW, which has more than 35,000 members, the Acting Governor commented on the accessibility of veterans' benefits, among other issues.

"Our veterans shouldn't have to fight for services and support," said Acting Governor Guadagno. "New Jersey will remain a strong partner in your efforts to work for accessible care for all of our veterans. We must also ensure that, as more and more women enter the combat zone - and, as it follows, the ranks of our veterans - we are ready and able to provide the gender-specific care that women veterans deserve."

The VFW traces its roots back to 1899 when veterans of the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection founded local organizations to secure rights and benefits for their service. These organizations would become known as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. By 1915, membership grew to 5,000. Today, membership in the VFW and its auxiliaries stands at nearly 1.9 million.

The VFW's advocacy efforts have included establishing the VA, the development of the national cemetery system, the fight for compensation for Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange and for veterans diagnosed with Gulf War Syndrome, and the creation of the Disabled Veterans for Life Memorial, among others. Annually, its members contribute more than 8.6 million hours of volunteerism. More information on the organization is available at <http://www.njvfw.org/>.

The Acting Governor's participation in the event reaffirms the Administration's commitment to support New Jersey's more than 400,000 current veterans as well as its future veterans. Acting Governor Guadagno serves as Chair of the New Jersey Military Installation Growth and Development Task Force, which seeks to forge an effective blueprint for securing the long-term growth and viability of New Jersey's military bases and U.S. Coast Guard installations.

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