

Governor Christie Signs Legislation to Name Route 31 as "Tri-County Purple Heart Memorial Highway"

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Designation Pays Tribute to All Military Heroes

Trenton, NJ – Honoring the courageous sacrifice of the nation’s military veterans past and present, Governor Chris Christie today signed legislation designating State Highway Route 31 as the "Tri-County Purple Heart Memorial Highway." Route 31 begins in Trenton at the Monument to the Battle of Trenton and traverses north through Mercer, Hunterdon, and Warren counties. The Governor signed the bill honoring the service of past, present and future Purple Heart recipients during his 98th town hall in Washington Township.

"As the crossroads of the American Revolution, New Jersey has played a pivotal role in the birth of our nation and has been the home of heroic Americans serving our country ever since," said Governor Christie. "Signing this legislation for the Tri-County Purple Heart Memorial Highway is a fitting tribute to all of our military heroes – whether from the Revolutionary War, World War II, Vietnam or Operation Enduring Freedom – for their sacrifice, love of country and commitment to bringing the American ideals of freedom and liberty to people across the world."

The Purple Heart is America’s oldest military decoration, established by General George Washington in 1782 to recognize outstanding examples of bravery and sacrifice among members of our armed services. There are currently more than 2,600 members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart’s New Jersey chapter.

The association of the Purple Heart with wounds or fatality suffered in the line of meritorious service dates to the early 1930’s. Ten years later, President Franklin D. Roosevelt extended the use of the award to the Navy, the Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard. President John Kennedy extended the award to anyone serving in any capacity with an armed force and who has been wounded. Across America, more than 1.7 million veterans from World Wars I and II, the Korean, Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars and those fighting in Afghanistan, and Iraq have received the Purple Heart.

The Christie Administration has continually acted on a strong commitment to veterans and their families. The Governor’s Fiscal Year 2013 Budget expands the highly effective Veterans Haven program to serve veterans in the northern part of the state at the site of Hagedom Psychiatric Hospital. Since taking office, Governor Christie has acted to:

- Strengthen the support network for military families after the death of a service member;
- Establish a program that awards high school diplomas to veterans who dropped out of school to serve in World War II, Korea and Vietnam;
- Honor Gold Star Families with a special license plate for families of members of the military killed in action for their sacrifice;
- Establish the New Jersey National Guard State Family Readiness Council Fund;
- Secure funding for the Veteran to Veteran Peer Support Program telephone helpline; and
- Reinvigorate programs like Helmets2Hardhats to put veterans back to work.

The bill, S-1366, is sponsored by Senators Michael J. Doherty (R-Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren) and Shirley K. Turner (D-Hunterdon/Mercer).

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