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Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno Joins Wreaths Across America in Remembering Veterans and their Families

Monday, December 9, 2013

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Participates in National State House Wreath Laying Ceremony

Trenton, NJ – Today, Lt Governor Kim Guadagno joined volunteers and affiliates of the nonprofit *Wreaths Across America* for a wreath-laying ceremony at the State House. She encouraged all New Jerseyans to remember the fallen and to thank veterans those currently serving, as well as their families, to raise awareness of the price of freedom and national security. This event paves the way for National Wreaths Across America Day set for Saturday, December 14th.

"New Jersey is proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with our fellow states as we lay this wreath at our capitol – our people's house -- in reflection and appreciation," said Lt. Governor Guadagno. "Especially, as we enter the holiday season, a time when families come together, many active service members will be sorely missed. They have given all of us a precious gift and it is important to show our continued collective support."

Wreaths Across America is a 501(c)(3) organization founded to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery begun by Maine businessman, Morrill Worcester in 1992. The organization's mission — Remember, Honor, Teach — is carried out in part by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies on the second-Saturday of December at veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and beyond. These ceremonies are made possible by thousands of volunteers who organize at the local level, raise funds to sponsor wreaths, and participate in the events. Since becoming a nonprofit in 2007, the organization has since expanded to include more than 1,000 local fundraising groups in all 50 states representing close to 900 cemeteries, military memorials and other locations, along with Arlington National Cemetery.

Participation in the event by the Lt. Governor for the Christie Administration reaffirms the Administration's commitment to support New Jersey's veterans. Since taking office, Governor Christie has expanded the highly effective Veterans Haven program and has ensured funding for initiatives like the *Veteran to Veterans Peer Support Program* telephone helpline, *Helmets to Hardhats* through which the New Jersey Building and Construction Trades Council tries to put veterans back to work through apprenticeship programs and launched *Operation: Hire a Jersey Hero*, which focuses on connecting employers who want to hire veterans with the state and federal agencies that can introduce them to former military people who need jobs and connect employers to incentive programs available to train veterans for civilian work. Governor Christie has also signed various pieces of legislation to assist veterans that include: giving qualified service members and veterans a clear path to obtaining a Commercial Drivers License (CDL), making New Jersey the 35th state to permit a waiver of the CDL skills test for certain applicants with military experience in operating commercial motor vehicles; allowing qualified military spouses to practice nursing through the issuance of a temporary courtesy license by New Jersey Board of Nursing to lawfully practice nursing in the State on a temporary basis, and assisting the wives and husbands of active duty service members who have left their jobs in another state due to the military transfer of their spouse to the Garden State.

In addition, First Lady Mary Pat Christie initiated the *Heart of a Hero* Scholarship through her New Jersey Heroes program to help military service members pursue a post-secondary education or vocational training. Over the past two years, a total of \$150,000 in scholarships have been awarded to twenty recipients to assist in making their higher education and career goals a reality.

For more information about *Wreaths Across America*, to donate or to sign up to volunteer, please visit: www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org.

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