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Acting Governor Kim Guadagno Signs Legislation Designating May of Each Year "Military Appreciation Month" Across New Jersey

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Trenton, NJ - Reaffirming the collective support and appreciation all New Jerseyans share for the brave men and women in uniform, Acting Governor Kim Guadagno today signed legislation in Middletown to officially designate May as "Military Appreciation Month" across the state.

The bill (A-578) passed unanimously in both houses of the state Legislature.

"Honoring the heroism and sacrifice of our military members is the ultimate bipartisan issue," said Acting Governor Guadagno. "Our men and women in uniform risk everything to guarantee our freedom and security. We must never waver in our commitment to remember their service and instill the lessons of their lives in the next generation. Thanks to this legislation, we can all join together as New Jerseyans to show our appreciation throughout May of every year from this point forward."

New Jersey is home to approximately 425,000 veterans, with another 73,000 combined armed services and civilian personnel currently employed across the state's military bases and U.S. Coast Guard installations. Today's bill signing marks the latest chapter in the Christie Administration's ongoing efforts not only to honor active military service members, but also to ensure that they are afforded a seamless transition back into civilian life and quality jobs upon their return home.

"Throughout our nation's history, the brave men and women of our Armed Forces have honorably and faithfully served to protect the freedoms we enjoy as Americans," said Brig. Gen. Michael L. Cunniff, the Adjutant General for the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. "Military Appreciation Month will reinforce the important role our Armed Forces play in safeguarding our country and will ensure the sacrifices of so many will never be forgotten."

Following the bill signing, Acting Governor Guadagno led members of the New Jersey Military Installation Growth and Development Task Force (Task Force) on its latest outreach visit to Naval Weapons Station Earle in Monmouth County. This is the third such stop to date since the Task Force's organization in early May, following previous stops at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst and Picatinny Arsenal.

Created through Executive Orders Nos. 134 and 154, the Task Force is charged with forging an effective blueprint for securing the long-term growth and viability of New Jersey's military bases and U.S. Coast Guard installations. These critical responsibilities include: organizing a broad-based coalition supportive of the state's military bases, assisting in the economic fortification of New Jersey's military installations, and ensuring alignment of base missions with larger Department of Defense priorities.

"The message we bring to Naval Weapons Station Earle is the same as in previous stops, as well those to follow," added Acting Governor Guadagno. "Our Administration is committed to creating an environment where New Jersey's military installations can meet tomorrow's challenges and thrive for years to come. This is not only critical to our overall economy and quality of life, but for sustaining a tremendous source of statewide pride as well. The Task Force will do everything in its power to secure New Jersey's legacy as a force for supporting America's military and its larger national security."

Located in two unique sections of Monmouth County, Naval Weapons Station Earle is home to a diverse tenant base and handles, stores, transports, renovates and issues a wide array of naval weapons and ammunition. Including direct

and in-direct impacts, it is estimated that the facility supports over 300 jobs and adds more than \$32 million annually to New Jersey's economy.

To complement the Task Force's efforts, the Christie Administration's Fiscal Year 2015 budget includes a \$200,000 appropriation to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to further efforts to safeguard New Jersey's military installations from any future rounds of federal base realignment and closure designations.

Chaired by Acting Governor Guadagno, the Task Force is comprised of experienced members from across the military, government and the private sector, including: Brig. Gen. Cunniff, former Congressman Jim Saxton, Michele Brown, Chief Executive Officer of the Economic Development Authority, Tracye McDaniel, President and CEO of Choose New Jersey, and Paul Boudreau, President of the Morris County Chamber of Commerce.

Primary sponsors of A-578 include Assemblymembers Gabriela Mosquera (D-Camden, Gloucester), Paul Moriarty (D-Camden, Gloucester), Wayne DeAngelo (D-Mercer, Middlesex), Alison Littell McHose (R-Sussex, Morris, Warren), Shavonda Sumter (D-Bergen, Passaic), Bob Andrzejczak (D-Cape May, Atlantic, Cumberland), Louis Greenwald (D-Burlington, Camden), and Jay Webber (R-Essex, Morris, Passaic), and Senator Anthony Bucco (R-Morris, Somerset).

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