

November 18, 2015

Street Vendor Committee Brief

Summary. In 1894, the New York State legislature made a promise to disabled veterans: they should be able to make a living by selling goods on the street without impairment or restriction by government. Since then, veteran street vendors have been increasingly restricted in number, in locations where they can vend, and in other rules, regulations, and enforcement that has become cumbersome and limiting to the ability of veteran vendors to make a living as intended by the 1894 law. New York State and New York City officials can and must do more to ensure this original promise to veterans is fulfilled.

Recommendations. In partnership with Veterans 4 Veterans NYC, Inc., the NYC Veterans Alliance Street Vendor Committee makes the following recommendations for NYC government:

- Current restrictions on veteran street vendors must be reviewed and revised to meet the original intent of New York’s 1894 promise to allow disabled veterans free and open access to earning a living by vending on the street, and veteran vendors should be engaged in any revision or change to the laws.
- A vending board that includes both disabled and non-disabled veterans should be established to ensure that veteran concerns are appropriately raised and addressed by city officials.
- Veterans must be prioritized, expedited, or otherwise granted exemptions from the long waiting lists for vending permits.
- Veterans must be granted preference for Priority and Colored (White, Yellow, Blue) licenses.
- Rules for ticketing, permissible distances from doorways, and other restrictions must be reviewed and revised in favor of increased access for veterans.
- Law enforcement officials must be made aware of exemptions and preferences for veteran street vendors, and veterans must be protected from difficulties and disputes with law enforcement.
- Mobile vending permits (“V” permits) for veterans must be granted citywide access, as well as include food trucks.
- Outreach to veteran street vendors should be made by city programs and resources for entrepreneurs and business owners.

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