



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Simcha Felder

Felder Urges De Blasio to Restore Funding to Priority 5, 6, & 7 Childcare Voucher Programs

SIMCHA FELDER March 10, 2014

| ISSUE: **FAMILIES, CHILDREN**

| COMMITTEE: **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

In the wake of recently published reports that the de Blasio administration does not intend to restore millions of dollars for certain after-school programs, Senator Simcha Felder (D-Brooklyn), Chair of the New York State Children and Families Committee, is calling on Mayor Bill de Blasio to reinstate funding to the Priority 5, 6 and 7 voucher programs, noting that cuts initiated under the Bloomberg administration disproportionately impacted the Orthodox Jewish community. Joining Senator Felder in his efforts to restore funding is Councilman David Greenfield (D-Brooklyn), who has taken a proactive stance in the City Council to reverse the earlier funding cuts.

In a letter to Mayor de Blasio, Senator Felder referenced his long-standing ties with the Mayor, saying, “During the time we served together in the City Council, we regularly fought side-by-side to convince the previous Mayoral administration not to discontinue funding for the Priority 5, 6 and 7 voucher programs.”

Senator Felder went on to write that Priority 5 and 6 vouchers serve as a lifeline for two-income families in the Orthodox Jewish community, which is typically comprised of large families. Felder explained that these voucher programs allowed both parents to work or get technical training while their children were enrolled in an after-school program or some other kind of childcare. “Without these vouchers,” Felder said, “these families have been forced to choose between earning a livelihood and being home to meet their children when they return from school.”

Felder also indicated that when Priority 7 vouchers were terminated, lower-income families with social service needs where one parent was working full-time were adversely affected. "Families which have been reduced to one-income households now have less disposable income, and therefore, are spending less," remarked Felder. "This has diminished additional tax revenues for the City and the State. Thankfully, the City currently has a budget surplus. Some of that surplus can and should be earmarked for the restoration of funding for these essential programs. Besides generating additional revenue for the City and State, I see this as an investment in the educational future of New York State's children."

In concluding his letter to the Mayor, Felder stated, "From my years of working with you, I know that you are committed to improving the quality of life for all New Yorkers. I, therefore, respectfully urge you to do everything within your power to restore funding to these vital initiatives, and bring real relief to low-income families who are struggling without these services."