



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Eric T. Schneiderman

Senator Schneiderman's Bill To Protect Yoga Studios From Harassment By The Education Department Clears Key Committee

ERIC T. SCHNEIDERMAN June 2, 2009

| ISSUE: **HIGHER EDUCATION**

ALBANY – Sen. Eric T. Schneiderman's legislation (S.5701) to protect New York's yoga studios from regulations that threaten their livelihood passed the Senate Higher Education Committee today. In recent weeks, the New York State Education Department accused yoga studios of violating the law by training new instructors without a license, despite the fact that such licenses have never been required before. The state also threatened the studios with fines up to \$50,000.

"Yoga studios have been unfairly singled out by overzealous regulators who've completely misinterpreted state law. The Education Department needs to get enlightened. The agency has never received a single complaint about poor yoga training, and yet insists on subjecting law-abiding small businesses to misguided, arbitrary harassment. This has to stop," said Sen. Schneiderman.

Last month, the Department of Education sent letters ordering yoga studios that train instructors to stop operating immediately and not reopen until the studios undergo a lengthy, state-run curriculum approval process.

Sen. Schneiderman's bill amends section 5001 of the state education law to include licensing exemptions for the instruction of students who enroll in courses "for the purposes of leisure, hobby, or personal enrichment," including yoga.

Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (D/WF- Manhattan) is the bill's lead sponsor in the Assembly.

"There is no need for the state to go after perfectly legal yoga schools," said Assemblymember Rosenthal. "Places of art, culture, dance and meditation, such as yoga schools, are critical to the happiness and well-being of many New York State residents. They must be allowed to function without the fear of crippling fines and potential closure. This bill will help to clarify the law and ensure that small businesses throughout the state can operate in peace and continue to provide invaluable services to their patrons."

"This bill will bring peace and tranquility to New York's yoga studios," Sen. Schneiderman added.