



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

Squadron/Schimminger 500-Foot Law Reform Bill Passes Senate

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Bill Will Require SLA Consideration of
Applicants' History with Community

For First Time Ever, Specific and Consistent Standards
of "Public Interest" Must be Applied

New York, NY – State Senator Daniel Squadron announced that yesterday the Senate passed S5577A by a vote of 59-0. For the first time, the bill will require the State Liquor Authority to consider applicants' history with Community Boards and make consistent the factors that the SLA takes into account for all applications where the 500-foot rule applies. The bill is sponsored by Assembly Member Robin Schimminger in the Assembly. If it becomes law, the bill will create clear, consistent, and enforceable standards that communities and applicants can rely on.

Currently, under the 500-foot law, the State Liquor Authority must hold a public hearing and consider the public interest when deciding whether to grant a liquor license to a new

establishment within 500 feet of three existing establishments, but is not required to consider specific standards. Senator Squadron's bill makes the standards consistent and no longer optional, and adds two factors for consideration: the applicants' history with Community Boards, as well as fire and building code violations.

Senator Squadron said, "Without knowing what is meant by public benefit, the entire public suffers. This bill makes community engagement more substantive, and encourages a strong working relationship between establishments and neighborhoods. It is another step toward making our nightlife laws clearer and fairer for everyone involved."

Senator Squadron has passed a series of bills that seek to create clarity and consistency in nightlife laws. Last week, the Senate passed S3775 Squadron/A7364 Millman, which closes a loophole in the 200-foot and 500-foot laws by clarifying that the distance between nightlife establishments and schools or places of worship must be measured from the property line. In September 2009, S5578 Squadron/A8518 Schimminger was signed into law, clarifying that the State Liquor Authority should not count restaurants, taverns and other nightlife establishments as distinct categories when considering whether the 500-foot law applies.