



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

## Senator Montgomery Honored for Reforming Juvenile Justice System and Her Untiring Commitment to Children

VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY June 22, 2010

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## **Senator Montgomery Receives State Bar Association's Award for Excellence in Juvenile Justice & Child Welfare**

New York State Senator Velmanette Montgomery (D-Brooklyn), chair of the Senate Committee on Children and the Families, was honored with the prestigious 2010 Howard A. Levine Award for Excellence in Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare by the New York State

Bar Association.

Sponsored by the Committee on Children and the Law, the award recognizes individuals who have done outstanding work protecting and promoting the rights of New York's children.

The Committee recognized Senator Montgomery for her work in improving the lives of young people in crisis through reform of the state's juvenile justice, foster care and adoptive care systems. Senator Montgomery authored legislation (S.2233-A/A.5462-A), which recently became law, giving foster care agencies the discretion to delay, if necessary, the filing of a petition to terminate the parental rights of a parent who is incarcerated or participating in a residential substance abuse treatment program.

"I am deeply honored to receive this award," Senator Montgomery said, "and I pledge to continue to be a tireless advocate for the children and families of New York."

Association members also applauded the spirit and intent of Senator Montgomery Re-Direct New York legislation (S.6611-B/A.10253-A), which encourages the placement of court-involved youth in rehabilitative community-based programs instead of residential detention facilities. This goal would be accomplished, in part, by giving localities financial incentives to create and utilize the more therapeutic community-based model for helping troubled young people turn their lives around.

"Re-Direct is the true heart of my New York State Juvenile Justice Reform Agenda," underscored Montgomery, adding that "the legislation provides important new opportunities and assistance for young people in trouble, and pumps new life into our efforts to implement a landmark policy shift in the way New York responds to youth crime."

“In the spirit of Howard A. Levine, Senator Montgomery is a true champion for children, protecting the welfare of our most vulnerable and fragile New Yorkers,” said State Bar President Stephen P. Younger of New York. “The New York State Bar Association is proud to honor Senator Montgomery for her extraordinary work on behalf of our young people.”

“From the beginning of her career as an educator to her 25 years of exemplary service as a New York state senator, Senator Montgomery has been a tireless leader and advocate for the well-being of our children,” said Committee Chair Professor Merrill Sobie of White Plains (Pace University School of Law). “On behalf of the committee, we want to honor Senator Montgomery for her highly effective leadership on children’s rights issues and her commitment to juvenile justice reform.”

The award is named for retired Court of Appeals Judge Howard A. Levine (Whiteman Osterman & Hanna LLP), a strong proponent and leader in the effort to improve New York’s child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

*Founded in 1876, the 77,000-member New York State Bar Association is the official statewide organization of lawyers in New York and the largest voluntary state bar association in the nation. The State Bar’s programs and activities have continuously served the public and improved the justice system for more than 130 years.*