



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

## Senator Parker leads Senate in passing Groundbreaking Fair Pay Act

KEVIN S. PARKER December 1, 2010

| ISSUE: **LABOR**



**Albany, NY)** Yesterday, the State Assembly followed the Senate in passing the Wage Theft Prevention Act (WTPA). This historic legislation will protect thousands of hard-working men and women from unscrupulous employers who steal their earnings by paying less than minimum wage, misclassifying them as independent contractors, or by forcing them to work off the clock, among other underhanded schemes.

This is a huge step forward for people in the 21<sup>st</sup> District,” said Senator Parker (D-21). “I represent thousands of working families who are at the mercy of unscrupulous employers. In these troubled financial times, those families need to bring home every dollar they have earned, rather than having that money stolen away by trickery,” he continued. “By increasing penalties on dishonest employers and by protecting workers from nonpayment and underpayment of wages, this legislation will help families in our communities bring home more of the wages they have earned through their hard work and sacrifice.”

Under current law, there is little penalty for employers who violate wage requirements. Penalties for wage theft are so low that there is a financial incentive to simply steal workers’ wages. Besides victimizing workers, such behavior also penalizes responsible businesses who cannot compete against law-breaking employers’

criminally lowered wages.

Senate Majority Conference Leader John L. Sampson said, “For decades, employees have seen their wages and overtime pay unfairly withheld by some unethical employers, and they have had little legal recourse. Fortunately, this legislation will change that.”

Deborah Axt, Deputy Director of Make the Road New York, added, “We thank the Assembly and the Senate for their groundbreaking work to combat wage theft.”

The National Employment Law Project estimates that unscrupulous employers steal more than \$1 billion annually from NYC workers. “And that is why Governor Paterson must sign the WTPA into law,” said Senator Parker.

###