



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

Governor Bulks on Bill for Blind and Disabled New Yorkers

KEVIN S. PARKER October 26, 2011

| ISSUE: **DISABILITY**



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE SENATOR KEVIN PARKER (D-21)

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(Albany, NY) Senator Parker's Accessible Electronic Information bill for blind and disabled persons (Senate Bill 1053) passed both houses. This legislation created a stable funding source to ensure that over 6,000 print-disabled New Yorkers would have access to newspapers, magazines, job listings and other vital sources used in everyday life. Unfortunately, the Governor did not sign this legislation into law. According to his veto message, Newsline is "already provided for and wholly supported and funded by the state." Governor's veto Memo 58.

Although Newsline does receive some funding from the state's Commission for the Blind, Senator Parker's bill would have provided for additional funding sources to increase and stabilize the program. The additional funding included monies from the Targeted Accessibility Fund, and potential private and public grant monies.

"We have been working to get the accessibility fund created for several years now. So of course I'm disappointed that it was not signed into law. The Governor's office expressed support for the bill with some minor changes, so I am hopeful for next session," stated Carl Jacobsen, President of the New York State Chapter of the National Federation for the Blind.

"I'm greatly disappointed that this important legislation was vetoed. This bill is not about me getting a bill passed, it's about 6,000 New Yorkers who use Newsline to search for jobs, to keep abreast of the daily news, and participate in other vital services available to New Yorkers. The intent of creating a special fund is to increase and stabilize the funding source." stated Parker. "I know the Governor understands the importance of Newsline and with some changes to the language in the bill, I am hopeful that this legislation will be signed into law next session," continued Parker.

Similar legislation has been implemented in thirteen states, including Pennsylvania, Maryland, Texas, and Georgia. Letters of support from similar states were sent to the Governor's office for passage and there was little opposition to the bill.

About Senator Kevin Parker

Senator Kevin S. Parker is intimately familiar with the needs of his ethnically diverse community that consists of 311,000 constituents in Flatbush, East Flatbush, Midwood, Ditmas Park, Kensington and Borough Park. Over 3,000 constituents in Senator Parker's district live with some type of disability. He is the Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee, former Majority Whip and Chair of the Democratic Task Force on New Americans.