



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

## Senator Parker Supports World AIDS Day “Getting to Zero”

KEVIN S. PARKER December 1, 2011

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(Brooklyn, NY) State Senator Kevin Parker (D-21) is encouraging all New Yorker’s regardless of race, religion or sexual orientation to take the time to recognize the significance of World

AIDS Day, celebrated on December 1 each year around the world. It has become one of the most recognized international health days and a key opportunity to raise awareness, commemorate those who have passed on, and celebrate victories such as increased access to treatment and prevention services for those in our communities affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The theme for World AIDS Day 2011 is 'Getting to Zero'. After 30 years of the global fight against HIV/AIDS, this year the global community has committed to focusing on achieving three targets: "Zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related deaths". "World AIDS Day is a unique moment each year when all of humanity celebrates the progress we have made in the battle against AIDS, and brings attention to the enormous challenges still to come," Senator Parker said. "The goals of 'Getting to Zero' may seem lofty, but I am confident this is totally attainable," the four-term Brooklyn lawmaker emphasized.

Senator Parker noted that HIV and AIDS disproportionately affects diverse communities of color. In New York State, more than 157,000 persons had been diagnosed with AIDS, while nearly 30,000 persons lived with HIV (but had not progressed to full-blown AIDS). In both cases, about 45 percent of those affected were African-American. The development and implementation of a national AIDS plan, as endorsed by President Barack Obama, with targeted funding and resources for prevention, treatment and care that follow the current demographic trends of the domestic HIV/AIDS epidemic.

"Overcoming health disparities, and promoting the health of all New Yorkers, remains one of our State's foremost challenges," Senator Parker added. "We must address the disproportionate rate of AIDS deaths among minorities by doing a better job of identifying persons infected with HIV before they progress to AIDS."

"With today's testing methods and medical care, this is a full-blown tragedy," Parker said. "We know that anyone – regardless of age, race, ethnic group, religion, or sexual orientation– can get HIV. That's why testing makes sense. I encourage you to arm yourself with knowledge by learning your HIV status. Even if you have no known risk factors, you should still get tested just to ease your own mind."

To talk with someone about HIV or ask questions, contact the toll-free CDC National AIDS hotline, available 24 hours a day, at 1-800-342-2437 or the NYS HIV/AIDS hotline at 1-800-541-2437 (English) or 1-800-233-7432 (Spanish).

Senator Parker concluded: "Ignorance and prejudice are fueling the spread of a largely preventable disease. We can all make a difference in overcoming injustice. This year, help reduce the stigma associated with AIDS. Talking openly about HIV and testing with your family, friends and colleagues is one of the most powerful ways of ending prejudice and preventing the spread of HIV."

### **About Senator 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. He is the Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee, former Majority Whip and First Vice Chair for the Association of Black, Puerto Rican and Asian Legislators.

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