



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

## Legislature Passes Gianaris Bill to Protect Children from Sun Overexposure

MICHAEL GIANARIS June 26, 2013

| ISSUE: **YOUTH**

(Albany, NY) Both houses of the State Legislature passed a bill authored by Senator Michael Gianaris to increase cancer prevention and reduce the dangers of sun poisoning for New York students. The bill will codify New York State Department of Education (NYSED) regulations regarding the application of sunscreen in schools and summer camps to ensure that children are able to apply sunscreen when spending time outside. Assemblywoman Aravella Simotas carried the bill in the State Assembly.

The NYSED and the Federal Food and Drug Administration include sunscreen on their list of over-the-counter drugs, previously requiring a note from a doctor before a child would be allowed to use it during school hours. Summer camps also follow these guidelines.

Understanding how important it is for children to protect themselves from sunburn and overexposure to the sun, Senator Gianaris' bill would only require a note from a parent.

“Our schools should be protecting our kids, not putting them in danger,” **Senator Gianaris said.**

“Prohibiting children from using sunscreen is senseless and harmful. I urge the Governor to sign this common sense measure into law immediately to ensure that our children are not at risk this summer.”

“I congratulate Senator Gianaris on the passage of his bill to protect our kids. I am proud to have been a champion of this legislation in the Assembly as we work to protect our state's students from skin cancer,” **said Assemblywoman Simotas.** “As a new mother, I know how important it is to take every precaution to keep my daughter safe and healthy. Making it easier for our kids to safeguard themselves from the dangers of the sun is a common sense strategy that should be adopted immediately.”

Senator Gianaris was prompted to author this legislation by an incident in which two young girls were hospitalized from severe sunburns after being exposed to the sun for hours during their school's field day. They were prevented from applying sunscreen because their school required a note from a doctor and parent in order for children to use sunscreen while in school.

Studies have shown that long-term, unprotected exposure to ultraviolet light causes up to 90% of all skin cancers, which are the most common form of cancer in the United States. Most skin damage occurs before the age of 18. Even if a child's sunburn or tan fades the skin damage remains and, with each new sunburn or tan, that damage could accumulate and result in skin cancer later in life.

# # #