



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

## Governor Signs Galef/carlucci Bill Banning Smoking in Playgrounds

DAVID CARLUCCI July 12, 2013

| ISSUE: **RECREATION AND TOURISM, STATE PARKS**

*Law prohibits smokers from exposing children to this harmful behavior*

(July 12, 2013) Assemblywoman Sandy Galef and Senator David Carlucci are pleased to announce the Governor's approval of legislation meant to protect our state's youth. The newly signed law (A.4205/S1643-Chapter 102 of the Laws of New York 2013) will prohibit smoking at public playgrounds where children under twelve are present during the hours between sunrise and sunset. This legislation would not prevent local municipalities from enacting or applying more rigorous anti-smoking policies.

"Smoking is far too common in places where children are playing and being active," **stated Assemblywoman Galef**. "This type of behavior sets a dangerous example; playgrounds should be looked to as a place that promotes healthy living and positive choices for our children. Smoking in playgrounds works directly against this concept."

"This is common sense legislation that will shield our children from the harmful and dangerous health effects of secondhand smoke," **said Senator Carlucci**. "New York State must take the lead when it comes to promoting health and wellness, and I can think of no more obvious choice than our public playgrounds where our families come to congregate. I would

like to thank Governor Cuomo for signing this bill into law so that all New Yorkers can breathe a sigh of relief."

Smoking in playgrounds creates a dangerous situation for children who may inhale large quantities of second-hand smoke. This smoke causes damage to our children during this highly important developmental period. In addition to the harmful effects of second-hand smoke, smoking on playgrounds sets a poor example for all children. Young children are more likely to place items found on the ground into their mouths, such as discarded cigarette butts on a playground. This is a serious health risk for these children, as ingested discarded cigarettes are poisonous and could lead to severe medical ailments.

"The Westchester County Medical Society with its over 1100 physician members would like to express our appreciation to Assemblywoman Galef and Senator Carlucci for passing legislation to ban smoking in playgrounds. We hope this policy will help reduce preventable health issues in our children and adults alike," **said Thomas T. Lee, MD., immediate past president of the Westchester County Medical Society.**

"POW'R Against Tobacco supports the expansion of smokefree outdoor spaces; not only in playgrounds but, 100% smokefree outdoor recreation areas and public spaces as well. This is a positive step towards reducing secondhand smoke exposure and creating healthier communities," **said Makeda James, Westchester County Coordinator of POW'R Against Tobacco.**

According to the New York City Department of Health smoking in select City parks declined by two-thirds between the fall of 2010 and the fall of 2011 one year after implementing a ban of their own. The Department also found that smoking-related litter on beaches declined by about two-thirds between the summer of 2010 and 2011.

Up until now, municipalities which have enacted this type of ban have seen dramatic changes to the areas surrounding where children often play. In June 2012, the Town of

Ossining passed a resolution that prohibits smoking at playgrounds.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 126 million nonsmoking Americans continue to be exposed to second-hand smoke in homes, vehicles, workplaces, and public places. Almost 60% of U.S. children 3-11 years old, or 22 million children, are exposed to second-hand smoke.

“I applaud the Governor for signing this important safety measure into law,” concluded Galef.