



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John A. DeFrancisco

## Senator DeFrancisco Promotes Legislation to Help More Young People Succeed in School and the Workplace

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO July 26, 2013

| ISSUE: **YOUTH**



Assemblymember Sam Roberts held a press conference on July 26, 2013, with Senator John A. DeFrancisco to urge the Governor to sign into law a bill they authored to reduce the number of part-time hours needed to qualify for the NY Youth Works program (A.7928-A/S.4762-A). The press conference was held at Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection, a nationally recognized Syracuse City youth development and dropout prevention program that helps students stay in school and successfully graduate high school ready for post-secondary education and employment. “The NY Youth Works program has already done a great deal to

help many at-risk young adults find work in our area and build a strong work ethic,” Assemblymember Roberts said. “But for many students, balancing their course load on top of a 20-hour work week is overwhelming and could put their grades at risk. By reducing the time requirement, we can make sure our young people have the chance to gain valuable work experience without hurting their education. Also, improving the program means businesses will continue to enjoy much-needed tax relief.” “If signed by the Governor, this bill will continue to provide employers with important tax credits for creating jobs for our youth, and it will also allow students who participate in the program to devote more time to their studies while still gaining necessary job skills,” Senator DeFrancisco said. “We hope that this amendment will encourage additional employers to hire youth and partner with Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection, giving Syracuse City students the opportunity to learn valuable workplace skills while gaining an income,” said Wayne O’Connor, executive director of Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection. “We are thrilled that 91 percent of our youth who are employed graduate on time. A job while in school coupled with the support of our full-time youth advocates help our youth to graduate with the skills and confidence necessary to excel in the workforce post-college graduation.” Under the NY Youth Works program, businesses are offered tax credits when they employ local, at-risk youth between the ages of 16 and 24. In order to qualify for the tax credit, businesses must employ eligible youth for a minimum of 20 hours each week. Many program participants are also high school students, making the work load too much for many students to properly balance, Assemblymember Roberts noted. This bill reduces the minimum hours required to participate in the program from 20 to 10 hours per week for those in high school, allowing participants to have enough time to focus on their school work while still having the chance to gain work experience with local businesses. With the youth unemployment rate in Syracuse currently hovering around 19 percent, this bill improves the NY Youth Works program and will help employ more disadvantaged youth. An affiliate of Hillside Family of Agencies, Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection serves 3,500 youth at risk of failing to graduate from high school in Rochester,

Syracuse and Buffalo, N.Y., and in Prince George's County, Md. Founded in 1987, Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection's evidence-based model is comprehensive and unique, combining long-term mentoring with job training, part-time work experience and year-round academic support.