



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

## Senator Parker Advocates Keeping Families Together

KEVIN S. PARKER November 20, 2013

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**Brooklyn, NY-** On Monday, November 18, Senator Kevin Parker was one of two featured guests at the screening and discussion of the movie *Fighting for Freedom* at Albany Law School. The Senator's co-panelist was *Terminator 3* star, the actress and producer, Kristanna Loken. The discussion was moderated by the Law school's Associate Dean Alicia Oullette and Albany Law professor Sarah Rogerson, who leads the school's Immigration Project.

The film, based on a story written by Ms. Loken's father, uses the fight to save a three-year-old girl from deportation to explore the broader theme of how children can be sent into foster care because of immigration problems concerning their parents. This problem is at the

heart of the New York State Reuniting Families Act (S4185/A.6377 – Parker/Kim), which Senator Parker introduced in the 2013 Legislative Session. The bill seeks to keep children whose parents are subject to deportation out of the foster-care system.

“New York owes an enormous debt to the hard work and culture of our immigrants. The community I represent in Central Brooklyn, has large communities from the Caribbean, South Asia, and West Africa,” said Senator Parker. “I hope that Kristanna Loken’s performance and the message of her newest film will sensitize people to the need to work to ensure immigrant families remain intact when faced with impending deportation,” the Senator continued.

The screening was organized by Professor Sarah Rogerson who directs Albany Law School’s Family Violence Litigation Clinic and Immigration Project. Launched last year, the Immigration Project offers legal services to domestic violence victims with unclear or undocumented immigration status. Senator Parker’s bill implements basic protections to ensure that children are kept with their families and out of the foster care system. This is accomplished by: 1) preventing the immigration status of a care-giver from disqualifying them for custody eligibility; 2) permitting courts up to 24 months to make a custody determination; and 3) creating a website that serves as a resource to courts, attorneys, and social workers.

“The legislation that I and Assemblyman Kim are championing in Albany uses simple common-sense measures to ensure the best interests of children and in the process save taxpayer dollars,” said the Brooklyn lawmaker. “I want to thank Professor Rogerson for her leadership with the Immigration Project and for collaborating with my office on the New York Reuniting Families Act, and thank Kristanna Loken for lending her voice to reforms that keep families from being broken apart,” Senator Parker said.

For more information on the Clinic: <http://bit.ly/1bes3jo>

For more information on *Fighting for Freedom*, including the trailer: <http://fightingforfreedommovie.com/>

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### ***About Senator Kevin Parker***

Senator Kevin S. Parker is intimately familiar with the needs of his ethnically diverse Brooklyn community that consists of 318,000 constituents in Flatbush, East Flatbush, Midwood, Ditmas Park, Kensington, Windsor Terrace, and Park Slope. He is the Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee and the Committee on

Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Assistant Democratic Leader for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Chair of the Democratic Task Force on New Americans.