



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

Senator Kevin Parker Calls for Support of Legislation to Improve Emergency Responses Involving ‘Emotionally Disturbed’

KEVIN S. PARKER February 19, 2014

| ISSUE: **CONSUMER PROTECTION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, DISABILITY, DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, CIVIL RIGHTS**



(Brooklyn, NY) – Today, State Senator Kevin Parker stood in solidarity with Communities for Crisis Intervention Teams (www.ccitnyc.org) – a coalition of 50 behavioral health providers and concerned citizens, and Brooklyn Borough President and retired New York Police Department Captain, Eric Adams, on City Hall steps to urge the Governor and Mayor to support the creation of specially trained Crisis Intervention Teams (CITs). The proposed CIT

training would enable the NYPD to better respond to the 100,000 'emotionally disturbed person' (EDP) calls received annually.

"When the NYPD receives a call related to an 'emotionally disturbed person' (EPD), that person is usually experiencing mental health issues or substance abuse problems, or both, but too often those calls can result in an unnecessary arrest, emotional abuse or worse.' said Senator Parker. "My bill (S6365), which I'm proud to say Assembly Member Jeffrion Aubry is sponsoring in the Assembly, would require training for the NYPD to enable officers to respond to EDP calls in a manner that increases the safety of the 'emotionally disturbed' citizen as well as police officers and bystanders, and creates better outcomes for all," the Brooklyn lawmaker continued.

The CIT model has a proven track record and has already been adopted by 2,700 police departments nationwide, including Chicago and Houston. CITs equip frontline officers and emergency responders with the tools to successfully diffuse and de-escalate crisis situations, and divert distressed individuals away from a criminal justice system that is over-stretched and ill-equipped to help.

"We currently do not provide the training and protocols police officers need to properly respond to mental health incidents. As the old saying goes, "when all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail," Senator Kevin Parker said. "So, police show up and respond to incidents involving mental health crises as if the citizens were committing a crime, or a threat to public safety, rather than simply being New Yorkers in need of help and compassion."

"I am calling on the Governor, the Mayor and leaders of the Senate and Assembly to help my bill become law in this legislative session," Senator Parker continued. "The pilot program my bill creates in New York City will decrease the number of accidental casualties from NYPD's response to "emotionally disturbed" person calls, and will not only increase New Yorkers' safety, it will save the city millions in avoided litigation."

Steve Coe, CEO of Community Access, Inc., (www.communityaccess.org) emphasized the importance of partnership and collaboration between CITs and the police. "We want the police and community members experiencing emotional crises to have a system in place that promotes safety, security, and emotional and physical well-being. CIT models have worked well in hundreds of cities around the nation, and now is the time to bring them to New York City."

###

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, Founding Member of the New York State Caucus of Environmental Legislators, and Chair of the Democratic Task Force on New Americans.