



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Toby Ann Stavisky

Senate Passes Sea of Japan/East Sea Co-Naming Bill

TOBY ANN STAVISKY May 6, 2014

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Albany, NY— Senator Toby Ann Stavisky (D-Flushing) today announced that the State Senate passed S.6599-D, a bill that would require new textbooks purchased in New York State that reference the Sea of Japan to note that it is also called the East Sea. Passage of this initiative is the culmination of over two years of partnership with Korean community advocates and Queens legislator Senator Stavisky, who led the lobbying and education effort for the bill within the State Senate.

“I am pleased that my colleagues in the State Senate have joined with me to take decisive action on this important issue,” **Senator Toby Ann Stavisky** said. “I have been proud to meet with my constituents and advocacy groups who have made this co-naming initiative a priority, and I commend my colleagues across the aisle for putting partisanship aside to work with me and achieve results.”

The name of the sea that separates the Korean mainland from the Japanese archipelago has been a leading issue for Korean advocates for decades. Although ‘Sea of Japan’ is the internationally recognized convention, Korean advocates claim that it was popularized in a 1929 publication of the "Limits of the Oceans and the Seas" by the International Hydrographic Organization, which was released while Korea was under Japanese occupation. As such, many Koreans associate the name ‘Sea of Japan with a long period of occupation and violence.

In 2012, Senator Stavisky formally requested that the New York City Department of Education begin using books that identified the body of water as both the Sea of Japan and the East Sea. Unfortunately, this request was rejected because of financial feasibility issues.

The final bill that passed was modeled after S.6570 and A.8742, which were jointly introduced by Senator Stavisky and Assemblyman Edward Braunstein (D-Bayside) in February. The introduction of the bills was hailed by many Queens-based Korean community groups including the American Assembly of the National Unification Advisory Council of the Republic of Korea, the Korean American Association of Greater New York (KAAGNY), the Korean American Community Empowerment Council (KACEC), and Korean American Civic Empowerment (KACE), who attended an Albany press conference in praise of the bill.

Speaking on the bill, Senator Stavisky noted the painful history that the name 'Sea of Japan' signifies for many Koreans.

“This name represents a difficult period of occupation of the Republic of Korea from the beginning of the last century to the end of the Second World War,” said **Senator Stavisky**. “As a former social studies teacher, I believe accuracy is extremely important. And that is why we must strive to teach our young people an accurate and fair history of these events.”