



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

State Senator Gustavo Rivera Passes Bill Banning Smoking Around After-School Programs

GUSTAVO RIVERA June 26, 2014

| ISSUE: **HEALTH**

Legislation Inspired by Local Bronx After-School Program Passes in the State Senate

Bronx, NY -Gustavo Rivera (D-Bronx), the ranking member of the State Senate Health Committee, announced the passage of bill S. 7560 in the State Senate today. The legislation, which was introduced at the urging of an after-school program located in Senator Rivera's district, would ban smoking tobacco products in and around after-school programs. S.7560 passed the State Senate with a unanimous 59-0 vote.

"We have long known the second-hand smoking can cause serious health issues, in particular to our children, yet many smokers decided to smoke in areas that are populated by children" said State Senator Gustavo Rivera. "Children should not be exposed to secondhand smoke when entering or exiting educational institutions or after-school programs. The passage of this bill in the State Senate is another step forward in our State's efforts to further reduce our children's exposure to secondhand smoke and the health issues that arise from the exposure."

Exposure to secondhand smoking can cause a vast array of health and respiratory symptoms and issues in young children, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, including coughing, wheezing, breathlessness, and acute lower respiratory infections.

This legislation is pending in the New York State Assembly as A.10046 and is sponsored by Assemblyman Victor Pichardo (D-Bronx).

"I commend my colleagues in the NYS Senate for voting unanimously to ban smoking tobacco products in and around after-school programs" said Assemblyman Victor Pichardo. "Exposure to second hand smoking has been proven to be detrimental to the health of our children and we have a responsibility to safeguard it. In the few days that we have left of the legislative session, I will work diligently to get this important bill on the floor of the Assembly for vote."

This legislation expands on a bill that was signed into law by Governor Cuomo in 2012, sponsored by Senator Rivera and Assemblymember Dinowitz, which banned smoking outside of schools. This move to apply the same principal to after-school programs was brought to Senator Rivera's attention by MARC Academy and Family Center, an after-school program located in the 33rd Senate District, after facing a number of obstacles in preventing smoking around their entrance.

"Having smokers congregate near our program's entrance sets a bad example for our children and exposes them to the harmful side effects of secondhand smoke," said Anna York, Executive Director of MARC Academy and Family Center. "I am very pleased that we are one step closer to ensuring that we, as an early childhood education and after school program, are able to provide our children with a smoke-free environment. I would like to thank Senator Gustavo Rivera and Assembly member Victor Pichardo for hearing our community's concerns and their leadership on this issue."