



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

## Senator Avella Advocates for “Comfort Women” Bill After It Passes State Senate

TONY AVELLA July 14, 2014

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*The bill requires the State Education Law to include curriculum instruction on the plight of the Korean “Comfort Women,” who were forced into sexual slavery during World War II*

**(BAYSIDE, NY)** On Thursday, July 10<sup>th</sup>, Senator Tony Avella joined members of Korean American organizations at a press conference to advocate for the passage of his “Comfort Women” legislation (S. 7759-A).

The bill, which was passed the State Senate prior to the end of legislative session in June, would amend the State Education Law to include curriculum instruction on violence against women during periods of armed conflict, including the plight of the “Comfort Women” who were forced into sexual slavery by the Imperial Japanese Army that occupied Korea during World War II.

Unfortunately, there have been recent efforts to deny the existence of this human rights atrocity and to blame it on alleged "racial conflicts" between Korea and Japan. These attempts make it necessary to provide an unbiased and factual account of these issues to our students.

“My legislation, which I am pleased to say passed the State Senate last month, would recognize the atrocities that occurred to Korean women and also to women of other nationalities, under the “Comfort Women” system,” said Senator Avella. “Last year, I was proud to successfully advocate for the passage of a State Resolution to recognize what happened to these women during World War II. It is now just as important, if not more so, to mandate an unbiased teaching of these events to our students as part of the State Education curriculum. I am very pleased to say that my bill overcame its first hurdle by passing the State Senate last month and I am now calling on the State Assembly to follow suit, whether during a special session before the year ends or in January once the new legislative session resumes. We need to recognize these historic events for what they are - human rights violations against women. If we do not learn from our past mistakes, we are doomed to repeat them in the future.”

Christine Colligan of Korean American Parents Association, “This issue is very important because it is a human rights violation issue. We must teach our children about these events and allow them to understand what happened. Recognizing what happened to Comfort Women should not have a negative impact on the relationship between Korea and Japan. Both parties should acknowledge these events so that we can learn from past mistakes made in history.”

Mr. David Lee of Korean American Public Affairs Committee, stated “I am very grateful for Senator Avella’s efforts on our behalf. It is a very big moment for the State because the State Senate passed legislation recognizing the events of Comfort Women. This is a big milestone. There a lot of conflicts going on throughout the world but the basic foundation of protecting historic facts is to recognize and teach events of history to our students. This is a human life issue and we must prevent it from happening in the future.”

Mr. Jae Yeong Kim, recent Francis Lewis High School graduate and President of the Korean American Young Leadership, added “We do not focus enough on the subject of history. Schools tend to focus most on math and science but learning history is just as important. We need to learn from our past mistakes so we do not make them again in the future. If we only teach the positive aspects of history, and not the negative, then the students are not really learning.”

