



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas K. Duane

Speaking at the 19th International AIDS Conference

THOMAS K. DUANE July 27, 2012

On July 26, I was honored to participate in a symposium entitled, “Leaders’ Perspective on Turning the Tide Together: Mayors, Legislators and Parliamentarians” at the 19th International AIDS Conference held in Washington, DC. Joining me on the panel were Vanessa R. Williams, Executive Director of The National Conference of Black Mayors; Ryuhei Kawada, an openly HIV-positive Member of Japan’s Parliament; Nonceba Molwel, health commissioner for the City of Johannesburg, South Africa; and Jeffrey O’Malley, Director of HIV/AIDS at the United Nations Development Programme.

I was asked to speak specifically about the crucial role of legislators in making HIV policy that can take us towards the goal of no new HIV infections. I spoke about groundbreaking Harm Reduction and HIV Testing legislation that we enacted in New York State that are models for those governments around the world that have the resources and infrastructure to support them. I also described the ignorance and stigma about HIV/AIDS that my allies and I had to overcome and which remain all too prevalent among elected and appointed representatives around the world. It is my firm belief that we cannot successfully advocate for policies that will take us to zero new infections until we have turned the tide of misunderstanding among policymakers.