



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

Assemblywoman Galef and Senator Carlucci Push to Remove Offensive Signage Introduce Bill to Create New "Accessible" Disability Sign

DAVID CARLUCCI May 20, 2014





Award: Supporting New York's Heroes

ALBANY - Assemblywoman Sandy Galef and Senator David Carlucci held a press conference in Albany to promote legislation that would modernize the Universal Symbol of Access to be implemented throughout New York State. This important legislation calls for the elimination of the word 'handicapped', and changes the icon symbol to represent a person seated in a wheelchair while appearing to be in motion.

Updated signage has recently been adopted in New York City, and is being implemented worldwide. It is a common sense approach, maintaining a people first perspective, and placing the emphasis on the person, rather than the disability.

Assemblywoman Galef and Senator Carlucci have introduced legislation (A.8193/S.6846) that will discontinue the offensive and outdated "handicapped accessible" signs throughout the State, and replace them with the revamped "accessible" signs approved by disability advocates worldwide. This new symbol illustrates a more dynamic person to reflect a more real world perception.

Assemblywoman Galef expressed, "A picture is worth 1,000 words. We have to be sure the right pictures are depicting the spirit and vitality of New Yorkers with disabilities. Having a disability does not mean that one must remain stationary and signage across New York State should reflect the energy that those in the disability community exude. In addition, we must eliminate the word 'handicapped' from our vocabulary. This legislation will take positive steps to change this disparaging language to instead read 'accessible'. It is so important that as a legislative body we make certain people are not defined by their disabilities. I look forward to continuing my work with Senator Carlucci, and with my Assembly colleagues so this legislation may become law."

Senator Carlucci said, "The word 'handicapped' is out-dated, derogatory, and just plain offensive. Working together with advocates throughout the State, we need to make sure we remove barriers by transforming the old symbol into an active engaged image. I look forward to working with advocates who joined us today and my colleagues in the legislature to make sure people with disabilities of all kinds have greater rights and opportunities throughout the State."

"The word 'handicapped' is considered a stigma by the disability community due to its origin in the phrase hand in cap, which was derived from a game of chance, and also believed to denote images of begging and vulnerability. In similar fashion, as the term 'mentally retarded' is offensive to persons with developmental disabilities, the word 'handicapped' is offensive to the disability community in general," said Lisa Tarricone, Director of Systems Advocacy, Westchester Independent Living Center.

John Zink, Director of Government and Public Affairs, AIM Independent Living Center stated, "The new icon depicts movement and activity—just because an individual has a disability does not mean he/she lives a static life, which the current accessibility signage depicts."

Wini Schiff, Associate Executive Director for Legislative Affairs InterAgency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies said, "Words and symbols are very important... they are tools that can either divide us or bring us together. This bill is more important than one might think in changing perceptions regarding people with disabilities and creating a society of inclusion for all of us."

Mevlin Tanzman, Executive Director of Westchester Disabled on the Move, "Disability advocates have asked for decades that the word 'handicapped' no longer be used to describe people with disabilities. It is certainly time for our accessible signage to reflect modern and accepted language usage. A.8193/S.6846 makes New York State a leader in the continuing struggle for disability rights.

"The Developmental Disabilities Alliance of western New York, applaud Senator Carlucci and Assemblymember Galef for being in the forefront on this important issue. Too often, people with disabilities are stereotyped because of antiquated words and symbols that depict and connote limitations," said Rhonda Frederick, President of DDAWNY. "People with disabilities should be recognized for their contributions and that is what this dynamic modernization of this symbol and language do," added Frederick.

"The word handicapped is pejorative and stereotypical and the move to a more dynamic and active icon and person centered language is emblematic of where we are going as society. The intent of the ADA is to make accessibility for all the law of the land and the older icon and use of the word handicapped is self-limiting and out of step with reality and what we see every day, namely of people with a disability actively participating in all areas of our society as barriers are being removed. This is in large measure thanks to the advances brought forward from the ADA. However, the greatest barriers persons with accessibility issues face are not necessarily physical but attitudinal. The active icon and move to the word accessible only will go a long way in changing attitudes which is where we must start. We praise and enthusiastically support the legislation proposed and look forward to its speedy passage."
George Hoehmann, Executive Director of Rockland Independent

Living Center and Vice President of the New York State Association for Independent Living.
"I believe this legislation is a positive step forward and provides a much more dynamic, inclusive and appropriate representation of people with disabilities," said Susan Constantino, President & CEO of Cerebral Palsy Associations of New York State (CP of NYS).

<http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-pkrhlHjfos8/UZs6vBsgS8I/AAAAAAAAABM8/utujst7w9l4/s1600/Old+versus+new+ISA.png>

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See attached photo:

Assemblywoman Sandy Galef and Senator David Carlucci along with Assembly Member David Weprin, Chair of the Assembly Task Force for People with Disabilities, were joined today, on Assembly Disabilities Awareness Day, at a press conference by advocates from and for the disability community to highlight legislation that would require new, more active signage and language to replace that which is outdated and offensive.