



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

## Senate Approves Bill Co-Sponsored by Addabbo to Make St. Patrick's Day a New York City School Holiday

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. March 16, 2016

| ISSUE: **ST. PATRICK'S DAY, EDUCATION**

Howard Beach, NY (March 16, 2016) Just two days shy of the official March 17th celebration, the New York State Senate approved legislation (S.6747), co-sponsored by NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., to allow New York City schools to recognize St. Patrick's Day as an official holiday.

"With the sizable and vibrant Irish-American population in New York City, it makes sense to close local schools on a day that is traditionally reserved for celebration, cultural appreciation, and religious observance by many Irish Catholics," said Addabbo. "Areas of my Senate district encompassing the Rockaway Peninsula were once known as the 'Irish Riviera,' and I can attest that Breezy Point, Belle Harbor, Neponsit and Rockaway Beach carry on a grand tradition of Irish cultural pride that is an integral and welcome part of our Queens community at large."

Under the legislation, schools in New York City could close on St. Patrick's Day in recognition of the significant Irish-American population in the five boroughs and not be penalized by a loss of state school aid.

“Two years ago, New York State approved a law to enable school districts to examine whether holding classes on days associated with religious or cultural holidays would ultimately represent a waste of educational resources when significantly fewer students are in attendance,” said Addabbo. “With the large population of Irish-American students, families and educational staff who call New York City home, closing schools for St. Patrick’s Day seems to make both cultural and economic sense.”

Addabbo noted that the annual Queens County St. Patrick’s Day Parade in the Rockaways, combined with the legendary New York City St. Patrick’s Day Parade in Manhattan, have certainly put New York City on the map over the years in terms of Irish culture, heritage and pride.

“We need only to look at these gatherings, which continue to draw enormous crowds every year and contribute much more than ‘a pot of gold’ to our local economies, to know that just about everyone is a little bit Irish in New York City this time of year,” he said. “I hope that our educational community will soon have the opportunity to enjoy St. Patrick’s Day as a school holiday and officially join in celebrating our city’s many ties with the Emerald Isle.”

Now that the legislation has been approved by the Senate, it is under consideration by the Assembly Committee on Education.