



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## After City's Shelter Announcement, Senator Klein Introduces New Legislation to Give Communities a Louder Voice in Shelter Placement

JEFFREY D. KLEIN March 1, 2017

| ISSUE: **HOMELESS, COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT, LEGISLATION**

*Legislation would ensure that communities are given advance notice of hotel use; and lengthen period of review for permanent homeless shelters*

**Albany, NY — State Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester)** today introduced legislation to require greater transparency of the placement of permanent and temporary homeless shelters.

“While the announcement by Mayor de Blasio to phase out cluster sites and hotels from use in the shelter system, which are often dangerous and unsanitary, is a step in the right direction, the city still fails to fully address concerns coming from communities. This plan includes no advance notification to officials or community boards when hotels and motels are planning to be used, and only 30 days prior to the opening of a permanent shelter for a hearing. Residents want a bigger role in this process and deserve to be heard because they know their communities best,” **said Senator Klein.**

“Since hotel-to-homeless shelter conversions began popping up in my district, I urged Mayor Bill de Blasio and his Department of Homeless Services to implement a process to notify affected communities throughout the city, as well as to seek their input. Under the Mayor’s

new plan to combat the homelessness crisis, he again ignores common sense proposals, offering only vague notions of engaging communities and their elected officials. This is inadequate. The concerns of my constituents have been continuously neglected by the administration, and I am proud to now offer this legislation with my colleagues that will bring about a real solution to this ongoing problem,” **said Senator Jose Peralta (D-Queens).**

“Community members should have the ability to voice their concerns when the city chooses that area for a homeless shelter. The legislation we are introducing today will answer a number of concerns city residents have raised about the city’s homelessness plan. Be it a temporary or permanent shelter community involvement is vital for the success of any program that hopes to curb homelessness in our city,” **said Senator Diane Savino (D-SI/Brooklyn).**

“I applaud Mayor De Blasio's efforts to address this city’s housing crisis through the use of permanent city facilities instead of expensive and poorly-maintained private apartments and hotel rooms. However, communities deserve the chance to have advance notice and a robust input process before a facility is placed in their neighborhood. The enhanced standard in this bill will make sure that the new shelters are well-integrated into their new communities and designed with the particular needs of each community in mind,” **said Senator Marisol Alcantara (D-Manhattan).**

“This legislation provides important guarantees to neighborhoods for transparency, adequate notice, and community input as to new homeless shelters and use of hotels as temporary shelters. We need to be sure to have an inclusive process that takes on board the perspectives of on-the-ground experts, local elected officials, and neighborhood residents. Every community must take its fair share of the responsibility to assist homeless New Yorkers, and every community deserves to have an open dialogue about how it will take that responsibility forward,” **said Senator Jesse Hamilton (D-Brooklyn).**

“Mayor de Blasio has continuously failed to provide communities in New York City with adequate information on the placement of homeless shelters. Residents need know what is going on in their neighborhoods and have a say in the process when they have concerns. This legislation adds accountability to the process and ensures that when any shelter is planned the community members are made aware and it is safe for families staying there,” **said Senator Tony Avella (D-Queens).**

“Good government demands open communication among community members, elected officials, service providers and other stakeholders in the face of difficult challenges, including our efforts to find effective solutions to housing the homeless,” **said Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. (D-Queens).** “If we are to provide the best possible housing and assistance for people who are in desperate need of shelter and services, notifying and working cooperatively with local communities is not only key, but absolutely necessary.”

“It is critical that community stakeholders are given ample notice prior to the placement of homeless shelters in our local neighborhoods,” **said Senator Leroy Comrie (D-Queens).** “I support this bill because it empowers the community and increases transparency.”

Under the new Senate proposal, communities would have a greater amount of input on the placement of shelters within their communities than by those announced by the Mayor’s Office. Rather than community notification 30 days prior to the opening of a permanent shelter, the proposal gives communities notice 45 days before the Mayor’s Office of Contract Services hearings. The legislation would also empower local community boards to request public hearings on a shelter. DHS would be required to modify its proposal based on reasonable concerns from such hearings.

For temporary shelters the proposal requires notification one week from the city’s use of the hotel as a shelter and requires DHS perform inspections to ensure sites are safe and free of

violations. They must also maintain a publicly available list of these sites. The legislation also requires a quarterly report from DHS on the use and proposed use of these sites to be submitted to local elected officials. Because many times hotels are used for weather related emergencies, the legislation allows for 48 hour post placement notification in the event of an emergency situation.

In January, Senator Klein and the Independent Democratic Conference released a report on the conditions of cluster and hotel sites used to house homeless families in New York City. The report listed the top ten worst offenders in both categories, with sites that had violations for issues such as rodent and roach infestations, mold, lead paint, unlawful cooking areas and failure to install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Senator Klein has previously introduced similar legislation to require community notification of shelter placement that has passed in the State Senate.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2017-S4802**

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate

- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Requires the department of homeless services of the city of New York to provide notice to local public officials relating to homeless shelters and use of hotels for the homeless

March 01, 2017

In Senate Committee [Rules](#)

Sponsored by [Jeffrey D. Klein](#)

Do you support this bill?