



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John A. DeFrancisco

## SENATOR DEFRANCISCO HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE WITH ARISE AND AARP TO ADVOCATE FOR UNIVERSAL VISITABILITY TAX CREDIT

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO September 7, 2017



Senator John A. DeFrancisco (R-I-C, Syracuse) was today joined by leaders of ARISE and AARP at a press conference in Syracuse to urge Governor Cuomo to sign his bill (S.2411-A) into law. The law would allow a tax credit for the purchase, construction or retrofitting of a principal residence to achieve universal visitability.

This one-time tax credit for a newly constructed or retrofitted home would not exceed \$2,750, and the total credit amount provided by the State would be capped at \$1 million per year for five years. The bill passed both Houses during the 2017 Legislative Session and now awaits Governor Cuomo's final consideration. Similar legislation passed both Houses last year, but the Governor vetoed the bill.

Senator DeFrancisco said, "If signed into law, this legislation would provide a positive incentive for more accessible and adaptable housing in the State of New York, so more senior citizens and other individuals with limited mobility can age in place. As a result, it would improve their quality of life and reduce significant costs associated with nursing homes and assisted living facilities. I am hopeful that the Governor will sign this important bill into law before the year's end."

"Nine of every 10 New Yorkers want to age in their own homes, and Senator DeFrancisco's legislation would help them do that," said Bill Ferris, AARP New York Legislative Representative. "Tax credits would provide an incentive to ensure principal residences are accessible to all. That can make the difference between aging at home or at a costly – and often taxpayer-funded - institutional placement such as a nursing home. AARP thanks Senator DeFrancisco for advocating this compassionate and cost-effective idea, and we join him in urging Governor Cuomo to sign his bill into law."

Tania Anderson, the Chief Executive Officer of ARISE, said, "ARISE's mission as a Center for Independent Living is to help people with disabilities live independently in our community. The most serious obstacle to our work is the acute shortage of affordable and accessible

housing in Syracuse and Central New York. ARISE supports the visitability tax credit in order to help homeowners afford accessibility repairs to their homes. Access modifications allow people with disabilities and senior citizens to remain in their homes and avoid having to move to a nursing home or assisted living situation. The tax credit funding mechanism will be an important addition to New York's current Access to Homes program, funded at just \$1 million per year for the entire state."

Universal visitability refers to a home that can be lived in or visited by anyone, featuring such elements as one no-step entrance, doorways wide enough to maneuver a wheelchair, and a first floor bathroom. Eligibility requirements for this universal visitability tax credit would be established through guidelines established by the Department of State Division of Code Enforcement and Administration. The Department of State also would be required to submit an annual report evaluating the tax credit.

Speakers included Senator DeFrancisco, ARISE CEO Tania Anderson, and AARP Onondaga County volunteer Bob O'Connor. Tom Griffith, a volunteer with the National Muscular Sclerosis Society, as well as several additional community advocates, attended today's press conference to show their support for the bill. The event was held at ARISE at 635 James Street in Syracuse. For more information on Bill (S.2411-A), please visit the Senator's website at [defrancisco.nysenate.gov](http://defrancisco.nysenate.gov).

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