



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

## Senator Parker, African American Lawmakers & Community Leaders Call for #DriversLicensesNOW

KEVIN S. PARKER June 6, 2019

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**ALBANY, NY** – With two weeks remaining in the state legislative session, African American lawmakers and immigrant advocates held a press conference, calling for the passage of Green Light NY legislation. As momentum builds towards an Assembly vote on the Greenlight NY bill, which would offer access to drivers licenses for approximately 265,000 immigrant New Yorkers, pressure is mounting on Senate leadership to follow suit.

**Rev. Al Sharpton, civil rights activist and President/Founder of the National Action Network**

said, "When routine traffic stops regularly lead to arrests and deportations of Black and Brown New Yorkers, something has to give. That's why the Green Light NY bill isn't just a public safety issue – it's a civil rights concern. Denying driver's licenses to those that satisfactorily pass the required tests is like something out of Jim Crow, and our legislators in Albany would do well to stop penalizing hardworking New Yorkers who already have to deal with bad public transit in low-income areas or wildly expensive car services just to get to work or get their children to school. NAN will continue to stand with those that have been leading the way in their advocacy for this bill and preventing this systematic exclusion of minority communities from a critical and often lifesaving transportation option."

**State Senator Parker** said, "Immigrant New Yorkers, like the ones in my district, are already contributing to New York's social and economic fabric. Providing them with access to drivers licenses will not only make our roads safer for everyone, but also strengthens New York's economy and promotes community integration and financial inclusion. Twelve other states have already successfully passed similar legislation with tremendous positive impact. I implore my colleagues in the Senate to call for a vote and pass this important piece of legislation this session for the benefit of all New Yorkers."

**State Senator Robert Jackson** said, "I support the Green Light Bill 100%. As African-American legislators, many of us carry memories of what it was like not to have basic civil rights in large parts of this country. Today, it is incumbent on us to stand up for undocumented immigrants so they can receive their rights in New York State, including the right to mobility. Let's pass the Green Light Bill and expand access to drivers licenses now!"

**State Senator Luis Sepulveda** said, "By now we know that the Green Light Bill is necessary in New York state to strengthen our economy, safety, and communities. Today, as we face increased racism and xenophobia across our country, this bill takes on even greater

importance as a testament of solidarity with our immigrant neighbors, and a commitment to combating discrimination against Black & Brown communities. The Green Light Bill is a crucial civil rights issue and I thank my colleagues for stepping up and uniting us in this effort to pass this legislation."

**Assemblyman Nick Perry** said, "Passing the Green Light bill will remove the unnecessary impediment far too many immigrants face in realizing their own American Dream. Our roads and communities would be safer for everyone, by ensuring all drivers are properly licensed, insured and regulated. Living in NY without the right to drive creates a roadblock for so many who are undocumented but whose lives are limited because they are impeded from pursuing life that is normal for everyone else. In New York, the right to drive is certainly so essential, it should be defended as a human right. A progressive state like NY, should act immediately to switch this red light to green, and legalize drivers license for tens of thousands of undocumented who otherwise live lawful and exemplary lives across our state."

**Murad Awawdeh, VP of Advocacy, New York Immigration Coalition** said, "The Assembly is ready to pass Greenlight NY legislation, and we look forward to our Senate leadership - Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Deputy Leader Mike Gianaris - to confirm their readiness to help protect more than 250,000 immigrant New Yorkers by bringing this critical bill to a floor vote. Access to drivers licenses has already been a boon to the economy and public safety of 12 other states which have passed similar legislation, and New York's restoration of this right is long overdue. Our community members have waited long enough and call on Senate leadership to show the courage of their convictions by putting the legislation up for a vote in the Senate in the next two weeks."

"As an organization for hundreds of thousands of African immigrant New Yorkers, we know that driver's license access for all is a Black issue," said **Amaha Kassa, Executive Director of**

**African Communities Together.** "Many of our members are cab drivers, delivery workers, and small business owners who need licenses to make a living. They need the NY Senate to step up and make Green Light NY a reality."

**\*\*This press release was written by New York Immigration Coalition**