



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

## Senator Montgomery Welcomes Solutions not Suspensions Student Advocates to Albany

VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY January 29, 2020



Senator Montgomery welcomed over 70 youth advocates to Albany. As part of advocating for the passage of the "Solutions Not Suspensions" legislation **S.767**, these high school students banded together to fight for the passage of statewide school disciplinary code reforms. The student advocates held a press conference in support of the bill in the Million Dollar Staircase of the New York State Capitol. Senator Montgomery also accompanied the students into the Senate Chambers and allowing them to get acquainted with what it means to be a New York State Senator and how business within the Senate

Chamber is conducted.

Many students of color, especially young women are targeted and suspended on average at an increased rate than that of their white and or male counterparts. Students across the state are disproportionately penalized for minor infractions, these students are not only students of color, primarily students with disabilities as well as students who identify as members of the LGBTQI+ community are also targeted and disproportionately impacted by school disciplinary codes. An issue that detrimentally impacts the overall education of children of color as they are often missing school days due to unnecessary suspensions.

The bill would allow for the creation of a uniform disciplinary code for all schools throughout the state, allowing for students and faculty alike to have a clear cut understand of what is permissible and not, as well how these infractions are to be acted upon by school officials. Ultimately putting an end to the discretionary practices of schools that are hindering the education of children of color, children with disabilities and children who identify with the LGBTQI+ community.

Senator Montgomery welcomes Youth Represent to Albany. Youth Represent was founded with the intent of serving as legal representation for youth who could not afford counsel. The organization has grown tremendously since its inception and serves youth across New York City in need of competent counsel. The students of Youth Represent came to Albany to voice their concerns regarding Raise the Age implementation.

Youth Represent is fighting for various improvements to how Raise the Age is implemented throughout the state. Their main concern is Solitary Confinement, which should not be legally used against Adolescence, youth and or juvenile offenders, regardless of the infraction

or violation. An issue that New York State needs to reform at the adult level in the Department of Corrections.

Senator Montgomery Welcomes students of the Children's Defense Fund to Albany. The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Organization that engages local, state and federal governments to push for policies that improve the overall quality of life for all children throughout the nation. CDF was founded in the 1970s by Marian Wright Edelman, who was a prominent figure in the civil rights movement.

Marian Wright Edelman worked tirelessly for on the civil rights front, she worked closely with Dr. Martin Luther King as his counsel during the historic Poor People's Campaign. Marian was the first African American woman to be admitted to the Mississippi bar. She did not stop there, she continued to fight for African Americans in her capacity as the director of the Jackson, Mississippi NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

She founded the Children's Defense Fund with the notion that the fight for our children must continue. The Fund lobbies lawmakers on both side of the isle to collectively come to conclusions that support students throughout the state. The students came up to Albany to advocate for the passage of Senator Montgomery's Solutions not Suspensions bill, S.767. Which would establish an uniform Disciplinary Code of Conduct for all students and School Officials within the state to follow. Ultimately, creating a clear and concise process in which students and instructors know what is allowed and what is not, as well as how to go about remedying said infraction.

Senator Montgomery welcomes Girl Vow to Albany. Girl Vow is a New York City based non-profit organization that primarily provides support to young disadvantaged women, helping

them to navigate the challenging institutional and bureaucratic barriers that lead to or are a direct result of unimaginable traumas. Girl Vow does not discriminate and assist any and all young people who identify as women.

Girl Vow propels girls towards empowerment by creating opportunities to participate in social and economic enterprise. They were in Albany to voice their support for Senator Montgomery's Solutions not Suspensions bill **S.767**, which ties directly into their organization as young women of color in inner-city schools are the one of the prime targets of ridiculous suspensions for minor infractions.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2019-S767B**

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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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Relates to school climate and codes of conduct on school property and disciplinary action following violation of such codes of conduct; and makes conforming amendments

January 08, 2019

In Senate Committee **Education**

Sponsored by **Velmanette Montgomery**

Do you support this bill?