



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

## Senator Kevin Parker Co-Hosts Press Conference Shedding Light on the Steel Pan Music Curriculum Bill for NYC Schools

JAUkia MCCONEYHEAD September 5, 2023

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**Brooklyn, NY-** In the lead up to the annual Labor Day Caribbean Parade, State Senator Kevin Parker co-hosted a press conference to shed light on his bill that aimed to further strengthen cultural education in New York City's schools and promote the vibrant West Indian community. The proposed bill, which is being sponsored in the State Assembly by

Assemblymember Brian Cunningham, aimed to establish a comprehensive steel pan music curriculum in NYC schools. Local community groups integral to the staging of the Carnival and parade turned up in support of the bill. They included: Tropical Fete, J'ouvert City International and Sesame Flyers International. The curriculum initiative is aimed at providing students with a unique opportunity to explore the rich cultural heritage and history of the steel pan and its significance in Caribbean music.

"By establishing a steel pan music curriculum in NYC schools, we are giving students the chance to delve into the rich tapestry of Caribbean culture and music," said Senator Parker. "We want to ensure that students have access to a diverse and comprehensive education that promotes cultural understanding and appreciation."

Assemblymember Cunningham said: "Steelpan cannot just be an activity or hobby that happens around the Labor Day season. It is something we need for our culture and it should be in our school curriculum," he added.

Named after the late well-known steelpan leader, Martin Douglas, the bills aims to give students a chance to broaden their musical horizons and develop a deeper appreciation for diverse cultural expressions. The press conference provided an opportunity for State elected officials who are carrying the legislation in both houses to provide insights into the content and objectives of the bill. In addition, the legislators addressed the authorization of school grounds for Labor Day Caribbean Carnival rehearsals.

"As advocates for cultural preservation, we wholeheartedly applaud the efforts in championing the Martin Douglas Steel Pan Bill," said Samantha Bernardine of J'ouvert City International. "It paves the way for the revitalization of our rich Caribbean heritage."

“This bill serves as a beacon of hope, offering a platform for steel pan artists to shine,” said a spokesperson for Sesame Flyers International.

### **About State Senator Kevin Parker**

Senator Kevin S. Parker is intimately familiar with the needs of his ethnically diverse Brooklyn district comprising sections of Flatbush, East Flatbush, Kensington, Ditmas Park, Midwood, Flatlands, Canarsie, Georgetown, Old Mill Basin, Mill Basin, Marine Park, and Bergen Beach. A lifelong Brooklyn resident, he is the Chairman of the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee and sits on the Senate Finance; Rules; Banks; Internet and Technology; and Budget and Revenue.

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