



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## Senator Klein Proposes Legislation To Significantly Reduce Underage Drinking And Tobacco Purchases By Minors

JEFFREY D. KLEIN August 29, 2006



Senators Jeffrey D. Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) and Martin Connor (D-Brooklyn/Manhattan), today proposed legislation that would modify existing law to require merchants who sell alcohol or tobacco products to use advanced ID scanner systems to validate driver licenses and non-driver ID cards presented as proof of the buyer's legal age. The original law, which was written and introduced by Senator Klein in 1999, encouraged the use of the scanning devices, however did not require them. The new legislation will make the

scanning devices mandatory, and make it easier for merchants to identify counterfeit IDs - thus reducing the occurrence of both underage drinking and tobacco sales to minors.

According to the International Institute for Alcohol Awareness (IIAA), underage drinking alone cost the citizens of New York \$3.6 billion in 2001. These costs include medical care, lost productivity, and the pain & suffering associated with the multiple problems and injuries resulting from the use of alcohol by minors.

“As a society, we have an obligation to protect our children from the malignancies associated with underage drinking,” said Senator Klein. “Each year 5,000 of our sons, daughters, nieces and nephews under the age of 21, die as a result of underage drinking. This legislation will provide the necessary resources for businesses to prevent many of these senseless deaths.” New York ranks 34th highest among the 50 states for the cost per youth of underage drinking. Excluding pain and suffering, the direct costs of underage drinking in New York are estimated at \$1.3 billion each year.

Senator Martin Connor added, “most bar and club owners are responsible business persons. This law will protect the public and help end the plague of under aged drinkers that has assaulted our neighborhoods. It gives bar owners the tool they need to diligently uphold the law”

Frank Mandelbaum, Chairman and CEO of Intelli-Check, Inc., the leading provider of age and documentation verification technology, states, “We strongly endorse the proposal of Senators Klein and Connor to reduce under-age access to age-restricted products. The best way to assist in preventing under-age drinking and the resulting economic and societal costs, is to stop the sale at the source.” Mandelbaum continued, “This proposal would do just that and our technology has proven to be successful in thwarting these sales.” Intelli-Check provides identification verification systems to over 2,000 establishments throughout New

York State.

In addition to keeping young people safe, the new law will also protect merchants by providing an affirmative defense if they are faced with allegations of illegally selling alcohol or tobacco to a minor. While merchants would not be relieved of their duty to use reasonable diligence, the use of scanners will be accepted as proof that the establishment has the proper procedures in place to prevent sales to underage customers