



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Eric T. Schneiderman

Senate Passes Bill To Protect Yoga Studios From Burdensome Regulations

ERIC T. SCHNEIDERMAN March 1, 2010

Sen. Schneiderman and Assm. Rosenthal's Legislation Brings Tranquility To State's Yoga Community

ALBANY – By a unanimous vote today, the state Senate passed legislation that permanently protects New York's yoga studios from burdensome regulations that threaten their livelihood. Last year, the New York State Education Department accused yoga studios of violating the law by training new instructors without a license, despite the fact that such licenses have never been required before. The state also attempted to slap the studios with fines as high as \$50,000.

"This is a victory for the yoga community of New York State. We can all breathe easier now that yoga studios will be free from the onerous regulations that threatened to shut down their businesses. This common sense bill ensures that yoga studios from Buffalo to Brookhaven can operate in peace once again," said Senator Eric Schneiderman (D-Manhattan/Bronx), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Senator Schneiderman's bill (S.5701A) amends section 5001 of the state education law to include licensing exemptions for the instruction of students who enroll in courses "for the purposes of leisure, hobby, or personal enrichment," including yoga. Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal (D-Manhattan) is the bill's lead sponsor in the Assembly, where it passed on Wednesday. In response to the advocacy of Senator Schneiderman and Assemblymember Rosenthal, the agency suspended its licensing requirements while this legislation moved forward.

"I am pleased to put an end to this mistaken interpretation of existing law that would imperil New York's thriving yoga community," said Assemblymember Rosenthal. "This law was originally designed to govern vocational and business training facilities and is completely inappropriate for leisure, hobby, or personal enrichment instruction. Had this problem gone unresolved, New York's yoga studios would have been dealt a serious blow in the form of damaging fees, burdensome amounts of paperwork and unnecessary delays in curriculum approvals. New York needs to safeguard its cultural resources, and in my district these instructors are a welcome and integral neighborhood asset."

The yoga community cheered today's vote.

"This is not just a great day for yoga, this is a great day for the health of both residents and small businesses in this state. Senator Schneiderman's leadership on this issue was decisive," said Alison West, Chair of the Yoga Association of New York State.

The legislation is online at: open.nysenate.gov/legislation/api/1.0/html/bill/S5701A