



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

Senator Montgomery Vows to Fight Child Care Cuts! (3-17-10)

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On Friday, March 12, 2010 in Brooklyn's Boro Hall, Senator Velmanette Montgomery met with child care advocates, parents, educators, and elected officials to develop a response to Mayor Bloomberg's proposal to slash funding for child care and head start programs.

The proposed cuts fall disproportionately on Brooklyn.

Speaker after speaker addressed the harm the proposed cuts would do to developing communities and the negative educational effects they would have on an entire generation of children. It was pointed out that while the reason offered by New York City for many of the cuts was the expense of rent of some of the centers, the City would still be liable for paying that rent through the lease terms, even though the children and their families would be immediately deprived of the benefit of the Centers. It was also noted that renegotiation of lease terms during this economic downturn should be quite possible. Many wondered why obvious alternatives to closures had not been considered before the decision to close the centers was made, especially considering the modest savings projected by the Center's closures. The Mayor's plan was seen as "...balancing the budget on the backs of poor children."

Local officials pledged to work to avoid the closings.

New York City Councilwoman Letitia James said,

"We have closed a significant number of day care Centers under the Bloomberg Administration. If he professes to be the education mayor, then he should demonstrate it, and fund early childhood education and keep our day care centers open!"

New York City Councilwoman Sara M. González said,

"When my children were young, I was only able to continue my education because of my confidence in a local day care center. I have always believed that education begins at birth and early childhood education is fundamental to excelling in your academic career. Parents who work or want to go back to school rely on these services and their elimination would have a severe impact on the local economy. As Chair of the Juvenile Justice Committee, I know all too well the results that come when educational opportunities are denied."

Brooklyn Boro President Marty Markowitz shared a personal perspective on the importance of Day Care Centers.

"Your voices will be heard. Your letters, your communications are very important. Day care is an economic development issue. Your work in day care allows parents to go out and earn a living, secure in the knowledge that their children are safe. I know first hand how important that is—my father died when I was very young and my mother couldn't go to work because day care didn't exist back in the 'dark old days.' And those days must not return. Day care providers are essential to economic development, and day care is good for children, it's good for their families, and it's good for the future of New York City!"

New York State Senator Velmanette Montgomery, Chair of the Committee on Children & Families, promised hearings to address the crisis.

"We see we have to raise \$9 million dollars. We can do this! But we need to get time from Mayor Bloomberg until we can finalize the money. We are committed to saving these 600 early education slots. Because you know, once they go they aren't coming back!"

"We are a community under attack. Our children have been abandoned, from birth to college. We need a master plan, and that plan has to come from the community."

That's what works, not the plans cooked up by politicians. The plan has to address all the elements—day care, health care, safety, education. Our plan has to protect our children, help our struggling families, and support our community!"