



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Malcolm Smith

## **Senator Smith Announces Legislative Package Improving Quality of Life for Seniors**

Malcolm A. Smith

June 16, 2010

ISSUE:

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**Sweeping Legislation Provides Better Access, Better Care**

(Albany, NY)- Today, The New York State Senate passed a comprehensive package of legislation expanding services and increasing access for senior citizens, Senator Smith has announced.

The package includes:

Increasing eligibility levels for the EPIC program.

Creating a missing vulnerable adult alert system for New York State.

Authorizing the Office of Children and Family Services, in cooperation with the Office of the Aging, to track and report on the incidence of elder abuse.

Simplifying the renewal process for the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Program.

Expanding the deadline for seniors to apply for property tax exemption.

After decades of hard work and providing for their families, seniors citizens deserve fundamental protections and services in order to continue to lead healthy and active lives. As New York's population ages, this becomes increasingly important. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2008 an estimated 13.4 percent of New York's population consisted of individuals age 65 or older.

The historic expansion of EPIC eligibility will ease the financial burden for tens of thousands of seniors across New York who rely on costly prescription drugs. As drug costs have risen, they have become the largest single source of out of pocket healthcare costs for seniors.

"This legislation lays the foundation for improved access to information and services for our senior citizen community," said Senator Smith. "As the baby boomer generation ages, New York's senior citizen population will continue to grow. It is incumbent upon us to provide the essential care and support seniors rely on to maintain healthy and independent lives."

This is part of the Democratic Majority's commitment to providing for and protecting our senior citizen community. More reforms and services benefiting senior citizens have been passed since the Democrats took the majority than in the last several decades combined.

Senator Smith applauded his colleagues in the State Senate Senator Ruben Diaz, who was the prime sponsor on this bill, as well as the co-sponsors Senators Foley, Klein, Valesky, Johnson, Addabbo and Parker for their leadership in helping to improve services for senior citizens.

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