



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Adriano Espaillat

## Just in Time for Summer, Senator Espaillat's "Nutcracker bill" to Protect Minors from Alcohol Abuse Passes in the Senate

ADRIANO ESPAILLAT June 6, 2011

| ISSUE: **HEALTH, DRUGS, JUVENILE CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

(Albany, NY) – As temperatures heat up, the New York State Senate moved to crackdown on a dangerous summer practice where sugary, colorful alcoholic drinks are sold to minors, posing a health and safety risk for young people and communities throughout New York. The "Nutcracker Bill," sponsored by Senator Adriano Espaillat (D – Manhattan/Bronx) will severely stiffen penalties for those engaging in the practice, adding harsh fines and imprisonment for repeat offenders.

"Study after study has demonstrated that alcohol and minors simply do not mix," said Senator Adriano Espaillat. "The dangers of alcohol consumption for minors are even worse when they are sold sugary, colorful alcoholic beverages that are easy to drink but deceptively intoxicating. I'm thrilled that the Senate passed my legislation which creates a real disincentive for alcohol to be sold to minors by severely stiffening penalties for abusers."

The "nutcracker" drinks are often sold in barbershops and bodegas around New York City. Senator Espaillat's legislation (S. 1880) comes on the heels of multiple investigations that caught barbershops and bodegas selling "nutcrackers" and similar alcoholic beverages to minors.

Under Senator Espaillat's bill, penalties will range from thousands of dollars to imprisonment for repeat offenders. Barbershops that sell the drinks will lose their licenses (while the law will apply to all businesses, unscrupulous barbershops are specifically targeted as they are the most frequent abusers).

Current law does not list the selling of alcohol to minors as grounds for barbershops to lose their licenses. This loophole will be closed, thanks to Senator Espaillat's "nutcracker bill." "Penalties and fines have to be harsh enough so they outweigh the profits barbershops and bodegas make from selling alcoholic drinks to minors," said Senator Espaillat. "By passing this legislation, we are sending a clear signal that there is nothing more important than the health and well-being of our young people."

The bill passed unanimously in the Senate (60-0). It now awaits a vote in the Assembly, where it is sponsored by Assemblyman Nelson Castro (D – Bronx).