



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

Senator Klein/ Assemb. Hikind Announce Legislation Requiring Sanitation Agents to Submit Photos WITH Summonses

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Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) today joined forces with Assembly Dov Hikind (D-Brooklyn) to introduce legislation to require city sanitation agents to photograph and document the condition of a property at the time a sanitation ticket is issued.

The legislation that came in response to three recent instances where New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) agents were captured on surveillance video in Brooklyn issuing fraudulent tickets to honest New Yorkers.

The lawmakers were also joined by two of Senator Klein's constituents JoAnn Sohmers of Ferry Point and Eileen Bengston of Van Nest. Both had worked with Klein's office on disputing these types of tickets. In each case, it is believed this bill could have lead to their violations being dismissed.

"A picture is not only worth a thousand words, but also time, money, and faith in the system," said Senator Klein. "Boston and Chicago have already taken this commonsense step into the digital age. It's time for New York to follow suit. I'm proud to partner with Assemblyman Hikind on this important initiative."

According to the New York City Council Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management, there were 262,426 tickets issued by DSNY in Fiscal Year 2011 for premises violations. The Hikind-Klein legislation is based on successful models in both Boston and Chicago, where sanitation agents are provided with a mobile device that allows them to take photographs with a time and date stamp, and upload the photos and summons to the central database.

"I would like to believe that DSNY agents are, for the most part, honest when issuing summonses," said Assemblyman Hikind. "But these surveillance videos tell a different story, and this legislation will serve as a system of checks and balances on these agents to ensure that they are not filing a false instrument when tickets are issued. If we know about these three false tickets, I can only imagine how many more cases of fraud there must be."

"Transparency is incredibly important to the process of issuing violations on behalf of a City agency," said Council Member Letitia James, Chair of the Council's Sanitation Committee. "Requiring DSNY agents to provide property owners with photographic evidence of a violation at their premises would assist in proper management of residences, and deter the handful of wayward agents from fraudulent behaviors. I join my colleagues in their commitment to maintaining the integrity of the Department of Sanitation."

