



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo Co-Sponsors Bill to Prevent Release of Personal & Sensitive Student Information Without Parental Consent

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR May 13, 2013

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Queens, NY, May 13, 2013 -- NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. (D-Queens) is co-sponsoring legislation designed to protect the privacy of New York's school children and prevent their personal information from being provided to corporate entities and commercial vendors without the specific permission of their parents or the students themselves. "New York and several other states have recently agreed to provide confidential student information to corporate entities associated with the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation and the News Corp., owned by media magnate Rupert Murdoch," said Addabbo. "As a parent and an elected official, I find it highly disturbing – especially since parents and students are not being given an opportunity to opt out of this information distribution. The bill I'm co-sponsoring will address this important privacy issue and protect student data from possible misuse."

The information about students – including names, addresses, test scores, disciplinary and attendance records, race, ethnicity, disabilities and other highly sensitive data – is to be used for a variety of purposes and will be made available to commercial vendors to help them create and market learning products. It will be provided to a new company called "inBloom," which is creating a national database of student information to aid businesses who contract with schools in developing their teaching materials.

"No one questions that we want our school children to have top-notch teaching materials that will help them learn and succeed," said Addabbo, a member of the Senate Education Committee. "But invading the privacy of our children and families, and possibly even exposing them to identity theft, certainly isn't the right way to go." He noted that the Murdoch-owned News Corp. has recently been weathering a number of scandals associated with personal privacy invasion issues.

Under the bipartisan legislation (**S.4284/A.6059**), stringent safeguards on the release of student personal data to third parties would be implemented, including a prohibition on “inBloom” information being gathered and used without the express consent of parents of minor children and of those students who are 18 years or older.

“I hope this crucial legislation receives the attention and action it deserves during the remainder of the 2013 legislative session,” said Addabbo. “Data mining, even purportedly for the sake of educational innovation, is still data mining and must be subject to appropriate and effective privacy controls and protections.”

The legislation is now under consideration by the Senate and Assembly Education Committees.

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