



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Eric Adams

Press Release---Senator Adams, Aging Advocates Rally in Support of Fraud Protections for Seniors

ERIC ADAMS June 17, 2013

| ISSUE: **AGING, SENIOR CENTERS, SENIORS**



SENATOR ADAMS, AGING ADVOCATES RALLY IN SUPPORT OF FRAUD PROTECTIONS FOR SENIORS

Albany considering measures this week by Adams, Assemblymember Millman to provide elderly with fraud safety net, create alert system to ID and stop schemes against seniors

(Brooklyn, NY – June 17, 2013) – Senator Eric Adams, advocates for Brooklyn's elderly and senior citizens gathered today to push for quick passage and implementation of legislation which would prevent financial crimes against seniors. The State Senate passed a bill by Adams approving the measures last week, bringing Brooklyn one step closer to greatly improved fraud protections for its older population. The Assembly will consider companion legislation by Assemblymember Joan Millman, the Assembly's Aging Chair, this week.

The bills would provide elderly consumers with a safety net when they are victimized, create an alert system so that evidence of fraud can be reported directly to law enforcement, and engage banks to identify and prevent financial schemes. NYS Senator Adams and advocates commended the New York State Senate for passing his bill, and urged the State Assembly to pass this legislation as well before its scheduled session ends this week.

"The financial exploitation of seniors is a despicable crime that is unfortunately all-too common in Brooklyn and across New York," said Senator Adams, Chairperson of the Senate's Committee on Aging. "This bill would create a much stronger defense against elderly fraud schemes by giving law enforcement the tools it needs to better identify and prevent these crimes, and by providing victims with a safety net should they get swindled. I look forward to quick implementation of the law so that our seniors have all the protection they deserve."

"I fully support passage of this important legislation," stated Brooklyn District Attorney Hynes. "Financial exploitation is the leading form of elder abuse. It is estimated that seniors lose \$2.9 billion a year to this crime. This legislation gives law enforcement another weapon in our arsenal to protect our seniors."

"I support the passage of this legislation," states Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson.

"Our banks need additional tools that will help them protect elderly and vulnerable adults from financial exploitation. Last year, my office successfully prosecuted Otto Kalo, a building

superintendent who attempted to gain control of the financial assets of an 84 year-old woman who was one of his tenants. One of her banks protected her, while another allowed the defendant to obtain some of her assets. This legislation will help banks to refuse to disperse money when they suspect exploitation and encourage prompt reporting of such incidents, so that victims can be promptly protected and predators promptly identified.'

"Council of Senior Centers and Services and the 40 other organizations supporting this bill applaud Senator Eric Adams and Assemblywoman Joan Millman for this landmark legislation to reduce the prevalence of financial exploitation among older New Yorkers," said Bobbie Sackman, Director of Public Policy, Council of Senior Centers and Services. It sends a strong message to the quarter of a million older New Yorkers being abused behind closed doors and to their abusers that New York is standing up to say 'no' to these heinous situations. To their credit, some banks have voluntarily increased their efforts to report financial exploitation. A standardized protocol for reporting financial exploitation to Adult Protective Services and law enforcement produces a seamless process for all banks to follow. It would stop the bleeding of the life savings of older adults. What better way to acknowledge World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, June 15th, then to have this legislation be enacted."

"Thank you for this long-overdue tool to help combat a particularly heinous and often-hidden crime that affects so many older adults, both rich and poor, said Judy Willig, Executive Director of Heights and Hills. "In my experience, it is hard enough for an elder to admit to themselves and others that they have been a victim of financial abuse; when a bank teller wants to do the right thing and intervene in the past there have been systemic barriers that often delay help until it's too late. Hopefully this law will help to stop this crime before it ends in tragedy."

Judy Kleve, VP Older Adult Services, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens commended Senator Eric Adams and Assemblywoman Joan Millman for sponsoring legislation and protecting seniors from financial exploitation. “All forms of elder abuse are unacceptable. Many of our seniors are preyed upon in this manner, and this bill, which is so necessary, will help banks and care providers protect seniors immediately from this type of abuse.”