



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

## Senator Gianaris' Bill to Protect Children from Sun Overexposure Becomes Law

MICHAEL GIANARIS August 19, 2013

| ISSUE: **FAMILIES, ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, YOUTH, POLLUTION**

(Albany, NY) Governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law a bill authored by Senator Michael Gianaris and carried in the State Assembly by Assemblywoman Aravella Simotas, which will increase cancer prevention and reduce the dangers of sun poisoning for children. The law will strengthen existing regulations regarding the application of sunscreen in schools and summer camps to ensure that children are able to apply sunscreen when spending time outside.

The New York State Department of Education and the Federal Food and Drug Administration include sunscreen on their list of over-the-counter drugs, previously requiring a note from a doctor before a child would be allowed to use it during school hours. Summer camps also follow these guidelines.

Understanding how important it is for children to protect themselves from sunburn and overexposure to the sun, Senator Gianaris' newly passed law will only require a note from a parent.

"Our first responsibility is to protect our kids, and we fail to do that when illogical regulations force schools to put our children in danger. Our schools should be encouraging

sunscreen use, not preventing it,” **said Senator Gianaris**. “I am pleased Governor Cuomo signed this common sense measure into law, allowing us to rest assured that our children will not be at risk when they play outside at school or at summer camp.”

"I congratulate Senator Gianaris on Governor Cuomo's signing of this important law to protect our kids. I am proud to have been a champion of this legislation in the Assembly as we work to protect our state's students from skin cancer,” **said Assemblywoman Simotas**. “As a new mother, I know how important it is to take every precaution to keep my daughter safe and healthy. Making it easier for our kids to safeguard themselves from the dangers of the sun is a common sense strategy that I am glad to see become law."

Senator Gianaris was prompted to author this legislation by an incident in which two young girls were hospitalized from severe sunburns after being exposed to the sun for hours during their school's field day. They were prevented from applying sunscreen because their school required a note from a doctor and parent in order for children to use sunscreen while in school.

Studies have shown that long-term, unprotected exposure to ultraviolet light causes up to 90% of all skin cancers, which are the most common form of cancer in the United States. Most skin damage occurs before the age of 18. Even if a child's sunburn or tan fades the skin damage remains and, with each new sunburn or tan, that damage could accumulate and result in skin cancer later in life.

# # #