



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

Coalition of Local Elected Officials Calls on SantaCon to Adopt Good-Neighbor Principles

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL November 26, 2013

New York, NY (November 26 2013) – Today, New York State Senator Brad Hoylman, along with State Senators Liz Krueger and Daniel Squadron, Assembly Members Richard Gottfried, Deborah J. Glick and Brian Kavanagh, and City Council Members Daniel Garodnick, Rosie Mendez and Margaret S. Chin, announced a set of principles organizers must follow to rein in the annual scourge known as SantaCon. During this massive pub crawl, thousands of participants dressed as Santa Claus overwhelm neighborhoods, violating numerous laws and regulations and creating major hazards to public safety along the way.

The coalition of officials recognize that SantaCon may be a short-term boon to a select group of local businesses, but it imparts many adverse impacts, such as vomiting in the streets, public urination, vandalism and littering. In a [letter](#) sent today, the officials requested that SantaCon adhere to the following three principles:

- 1) Make public and follow defined routes;
- 2) Ensure respectful participants; and
- 3) Implement a comprehensive safety plan.

“What should be a frivolous and lighthearted event has become little more than a costumed parade of drunken lawbreaking,” said **Senator Hoylman**. “Any large event in New York has to be respectful of its surrounding community. To avoid ending up on the naughty list again, SantaCon organizers must adopt these principles and maintain an orderly event.”

The coalition letter reiterated a request that Senator Hoylman made to SantaCon organizers last month to work with local Community Boards and the New York City Police Department to identify ways the event can significantly mitigate its impact on the communities it visits. Despite assurances from SantaCon organizers that they would work with the NYPD, no details have been made public.

“For hundreds of years merry-making in taverns, beer halls and bars has been part of the fabric of life in our city, but there’s nothing merry about a costumed, abusive crowd wandering the streets spreading mayhem,” said **Senator Liz Krueger**. “If SantaCon’s organizers want to spread cheer instead of fear in our neighborhoods this holiday season, they’ve got some work to do.”

“‘A group of drunks in Santa suits walk into a bar’ might sound like the start of a joke, but there's nothing funny about SantaCon,” said **Assembly Member Richard Gottfried**, who represents Hell's Kitchen/Clinton. “If the organizers and participating bars can't protect the public, the police and the State Liquor Authority need to act.”

“Our communities have suffered by the actions of participants of SantaCon for too many years. While I appreciate patronage to small, local businesses, this event does so at the expense of public health and safety of participants and community members. A thoughtful, public plan must be established and made available,” said **Assembly Member Deborah J. Glick**.

“Dress as Santa to go drinking if you must, but you’d BETTER be good, for goodness sake,” said **Assembly Member Brian Kavanagh**.

“Anytime we have a large, organized event in New York City, we need to ensure that the NYPD and local communities know what to expect,” said **Council Member Dan Garodnick**. “We are looking to the organizers to develop a plan that allows the fun to continue while respecting the rest of the community.”

“We have made a list of guiding principles for this year’s SantaCon—and we’re checking it twice. While everyone appreciates holiday cheer, it is important that the organizers and participants respect the surrounding neighborhood and work toward a festive but safe event,” said **Council Member Margaret S. Chin**.