



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

Senator Jeff Klein Receives 2014 YMCA "Champion for Healthy Living" Award for Efforts in Preventing Childhood Obesity

JEFFREY D. KLEIN May 7, 2014

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ALBANY, NY – Today, Senate Co-Leader Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) addressed YMCA Healthy Kids Day, an advocacy event dedicated to raise awareness on the issue of childhood obesity and get more children physically active. The Alliance of New York State YMCAs, which helped to organize the event, also presented Senator Klein with an award highlighting his successful efforts in passing health-related legislation that promotes a healthy and active lifestyle and strengthens underserved communities with high rates of obesity.

Senate Co-Leader Jeffrey D. Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) said: "I am honored to be the recipient of the 2014 YMCA Champion for Healthy Living Award. We know that nothing poses a greater risk to the health and wellness of our children than obesity. Last year several of my bills to combat obesity were signed into law giving our youngest New Yorkers increased access to healthy, wholesome foods and educational programs that promote healthy living. I applaud the YMCA's continued commitment to the well-being of the children of our state and look forward to continuing our great work together to ensure that our youngsters are able to live full, healthy and happy lives."

Senator Klein discussed many of his signature issues at a press conference inside the Legislative Office Building. Other attendees included local YMCA organizations throughout New York City; Tumi Oguntala, winner of Season 15 of NBC's *The Biggest Loser*; and corporate sponsors such as Shop Rite and Hannaford food stores.

Last year, at the behest of Senator Klein, the senate Independent Democratic Conference launched a public *Teen Health Awareness Campaign* that sought to reduce the spiking trends in adolescent obesity, among other issues. After conducting its own statewide survey that solicited responses from teenagers in junior high and high schools, the data confirmed that students lack a fundamental understanding of what constitutes obesity, proper dietary nutrition, symptoms and factors that lead to poor weight management, and a lack of exercise availability.

As a result of these findings, Senator Klein was able to include in last year's final budget package the Healthy Teen Awareness and Education Fund, a designation on all future state income tax forms that will appear as a "check-off box" that will enable New Yorkers to make voluntary donations to fund programs geared at combating obesity, endometriosis, and long-term alcohol and substance abuse.

Senator Klein has also introduced legislation this year that will allow insurers and HMOs to provide discounts to individuals who opt to participate in wellness programs; curtail the incidence of asthma and other respiratory diseases; expand recreational areas in elementary and secondary schools; and increase screening in schools for childhood obesity while providing adequate time for exercise during lunch periods.