



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Kevin S. Parker

Senate Unanimously Passes Senator Parker's Bill to Protect Mentally Disabled Persons Living in Community Residences

KEVIN S. PARKER May 6, 2014

| ISSUE: [HEALTH](#), [MENTAL HEALTH](#), [DISABILITY](#), [CONSTITUENTS CORNER](#)



(Brooklyn, NY) – In a unanimous vote on Tuesday May 6, State Senator Kevin Parker’s bill, S.955, passed the Senate. The bill clarifies that the discharge of a resident from a community residence licensed or operated by the Office of Mental Health (OMH) or the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) shall not be considered a landlord / tenant matter, as opposed to be governed by regulations aimed at creating the best therapeutic outcome for such a resident.

“This Tuesday, we took an important step toward protecting a population that is too often misrepresented, misunderstood and stigmatized,” said Senator Kevin Parker. “We must not

ignore the growing number of challenges that face the mentally disabled community. This piece of legislation, when it passes the Assembly and is signed by the Governor will put in place an important preventative measure so that residents of community mental health residences are not summarily evicted onto the streets.”

Senator Parker has been a vocal advocate of the mental disabled community with recent authorship of legislation such as the Crisis Intervention Team Act (S.6365), which would mandate specially trained Crisis Intervention Teams (CITs) to respond to emergency calls involving the emotionally disturbed. The CIT model has a proven track record and has already been adopted by 2,700 police departments nationwide, including Chicago and Houston. CITs equip frontline officers and emergency responders with the tools to successfully diffuse and de-escalate crisis situations, and divert distressed individuals away from a criminal justice system that is over-stretched and ill-equipped to help.

“To treat mental health issues concerning community residents who are in clinical treatment programs at OMH and OPWDD facilities as landlord / tenant issues is counterintuitive,” continued Senator Parker. “A discharge from these programs prematurely or based on a landlord/tenant issue and not grounded in clinical determinations is unfair, rather than giving them the treatment they need to be integrated back into society.”

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About Senator Kevin Parker

Senator Kevin S. Parker is intimately familiar with the needs of his ethnically diverse Brooklyn community that consists of 318,000 constituents in Flatbush, East Flatbush, Midwood, Ditmas Park, Kensington, Windsor Terrace, and Park Slope. He is the Ranking Member of the Senate Committees on Energy and Telecommunications and Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Assistant Democratic Leader for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Chair of the Democratic Task Force on New Americans.