



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Simcha Felder

## Felder Sponsors Legislation to Help Parents of Special Needs Students

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Senator Simcha Felder (D-Brooklyn) has taken the lead as the prime Senate sponsor of a bill which streamlines the process of special education placements and requires a more expeditious placement and tuition reimbursement process for private schools. The bill will be introduced this week in the Senate and is being sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblywoman Helene Weinstein (D-Brooklyn).

“Parents of special education children have enough to worry about without having to jump through hoops each time their child needs an evaluation or placement,” said Senator Felder, who chairs both the New York City Education Subcommittee and the Children and Families Committee. “This vitally important legislation will ensure students with disabilities receive appropriate placements and timely reimbursements for their educational costs. This is about doing what is in the best interest of the child.”

On average, parents pay lawyers or advocates between \$2,000 and \$15,000 each year when they are forced to sue the City for reimbursement. Services rendered to special education students in a private school setting cost between 40 to 60 percent less than they would in a public school.

The provisions of Felder's bill require that parental challenges to school district placements in cities of one million or more be resolved within 90 days. It also requires that any settlement or judicial determination in favor of the parent's placement set forth the timeline for making payments and include the amount of the payment.

"This measure is all about putting children first," said Assemblywoman Weinstein. "It is about removing barriers to education for one of our most vulnerable populations, children with special needs. It is about giving these children an equal opportunity to succeed."

"Passing this bill would be a great help for the parents of disabled children," said Mr. Abe Eisner, Chairman of the HASC Center, Inc., a nonprofit organization which advocates for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities. "It's the least we can do to help them out and ease the burden on families with special needs kids."

"I am grateful to Senator John Flanagan, Chair of the Education Committee, and to Governor Cuomo for their efforts involving this legislation," Senator Felder added. "I am confident that together we will be able to achieve much-needed relief for parents of special needs students."