



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

Senate Passes Senator Parker's Bill to Aid Prisoners Upon their Release

Kevin S. Parker

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ISSUE:

- [Mental Health](#)
- [Social Services](#)
- [Alcohol](#)
- [Health Care](#)
- [Women's Health](#)

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(Brooklyn, NY) – Last week, the State Senate passed Senate Bill S.1353, by Senator Kevin Parker. The bill requires that prisoners be informed of healthcare, mental healthcare and other services upon their release from state prison. In an attempt to make their reintegration into society as seamless as possible, and to safeguard our community's public health and welfare, the former prisoners will be alerted to special programs in their communities, such as tuberculosis services, HIV/AIDS services, education, alcohol or substance abuse treatment, and other general mental health services.

"Experience has shown us that former prisoners returning to communities like ours do best when we provide them with knowledge of the services available to help them transition healthfully to life on the outside," Senator Parker said.

Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh, the sponsor of the bill in the Assembly, said, "This bill will help break the 'prison cycle' of people being jailed again after they have been released. Assisting former prisoners to make the transition out of incarceration benefits not just the person who receives the services, but all of us-- particularly the communities in which ex-prisoners reside and the taxpayers who incur the cost of arrests, judicial proceedings, and re-incarceration. I applaud and thank Senator Parker and his colleagues in the Senate for passing this important legislation and I look forward to passing it in the Assembly."

One of the major impetuses for the legislation is to mitigate the spread of disease in New York. The bill addresses the critical need for prisoners -- one in five of whom is HIV infected, and who test positive for tuberculosis in similar numbers -- to be made aware of the health and educational services available to them in the communities they plan to re-enter upon release.

The bill shall take effect on the one hundred twentieth day after it shall have become law.

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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 Committee and Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Assistant Democratic Leader for Intergovernmental Affairs, and Chair of the Democratic Task Force on New Americans.