



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin S. Parker

## World Aids Day 2014: A Time to Remember and Hope for the Future

KEVIN S. PARKER December 1, 2014

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**FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE SENATOR KEVIN PARKER (D-Brooklyn)**

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### **World Aids Day 2014: A Time to Remember and Hope for the Future**

Today, on World AIDS Day 2014, I ask you to join me in remembering family, friends, and neighbors lost to HIV/AIDS. I ask you to join me in remembering three decades of struggle to

end discrimination against persons living with HIV/AIDS, and to give them access to the antiviral treatment they need. I also ask you to join me in standing with President Obama and in solidarity with everyone around the world who is continuing the struggle to beat this disease and to end discrimination.

Over the past three decades, HIV/AIDS has claimed more than 39 million lives and remains a global public health challenge. Today, there are more than 35 million persons living with HIV around the world, and approximately 70% of whom are living in Sub-Saharan Africa, where almost 25% of the population is living with HIV.

Within the United States, more than 1.2 million people are living with HIV/AIDS, among whom gay men, and African-American and Latino communities have the highest HIV/AIDS disparities. More than 10% of people living with HIV/AIDS in the United States are in New York State, primarily in New York City, the national epicenter of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States

The World Health Organization's theme for World AIDS Day 2014 is "Focus, Partner, Achieve: An AIDS-free Generation." We see that partnership and focus in the incredible work and dedication of families, advocates and affected communities, patients, and researchers working together will move us closer to the promise of an AIDS-free generation; and through the work of UNICEF, more than 1.1 million infections of children under the age of 15 have been averted.

As your representative, I introduced S.827, legislation that will reform policies concerning syringe possession and stop HIV infections arising from non-sterile needles. I also introduced S.1129, which will reform programs in prisons to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and attack the spread of HIV at that source. The HIV taskforce we advocated for this year was finally announced by the Governor, and I believe with forceful advocacy by legislators like myself, it will provide us with strategies to continue moving forward toward

bringing the AIDS epidemic in New York to a close. New York has seen almost a 40% decrease in new HIV diagnoses over the last ten years, while at the same time HIV infections traceable to injection drugs has declined by almost 90%, and mother-to-child transmission has lowered by 99%.

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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.