



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

State Senator Gustavo Rivera and Assemblymember Victor Pichardo's Legislation to Protect Children's Health Becomes Law

GUSTAVO RIVERA August 25, 2015

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(Bronx, NY) - State Senator Gustavo Rivera (D-Bronx) and Assemblymember Victor Pichardo (D-Bronx) announced that the legislation they authored to ban smoking tobacco products in and around after-school programs has been signed into law by the governor.

"Many working parents rely on after-school programs to provide a structured environment where kids can safely socialize, improve their academic performance and develop new skills," said Assemblymember Pichardo. "This law will further protect the health and well-being of our kids by ensuring students are not exposed to the dangers and harmful effects of secondhand smoke during their extracurricular activities."

The law prohibits individuals from smoking tobacco products within 100 feet of entrances, exits or outdoor areas of educational institutions while after-school programs are in effect. It was introduced at the urging of MARC Academy and Family Center, an after-school program located in the Bronx, and will go into effect within 30 days.

"I commend Governor Cuomo for signing into law this bill to ensure that children in our communities are not subjected to the dangers of secondhand smoke when entering or exiting their after-school programs," said State Senator Gustavo Rivera. "After-school programs should be safe learning spaces, and Assemblymember Pichardo and I will continue to work hard to safeguard our community's public health."

Secondhand smoke is incredibly dangerous to children, greatly increasing the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), ear infections, respiratory infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia and respiratory symptoms, including more frequent and severe asthma attacks. From 2009 to 2011, Bronx County had the highest age-adjusted asthma death rate in New York

City as well as the highest rates of asthma-related emergency department visits and hospital discharges at the county level.

"Secondhand smoke puts our children's health at risk," said Anna York, Executive Director of MARC Academy and Family Center. "By prohibiting smoking near after-school programs, this law will allow children to experience all that these activities have to offer while giving parents peace of mind knowing that their kids' health is still protected. Assemblymember Pichardo and Senator Rivera's leadership on this issue has been invaluable, and we appreciate their efforts on behalf of the community."