



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas K. Duane

## Celebrating Victories and Engaging in Civil Disobedience for New York's Disadvantaged

THOMAS K. DUANE November 12, 2010



On November 11, at Voices of Community Advocates and Leaders New York's (VOCAL NY) 10th Anniversary Gala, I was honored to receive the inaugural Bob Kohler Award in recognition of my work on behalf of people who are living with or affected by HIV/AIDS, homelessness or incarceration. This award was especially meaningful not only because of my close partnership with VOCAL NY in securing significant legislative victories but also because the award was named for my friend the late Bob Kohler, who was a legendary progressive activist and champion for New York's least advantaged. I was also pleased to

share the recognition with the organization's other honorees, U.S. Representative Jerry Nadler, New York State Assemblymember Hakeem Jeffries and extraordinary activist Wanda Hernandez (with whom I am pictured).

Tragically, the gala was not entirely celebratory because at the urging of Mayor Bloomberg, Governor Paterson vetoed my and Assembly Member Deborah Glick's legislation that would have capped - at 30% of income - the rent contribution of people living with HIV/AIDS who receive rental assistance from the New York City HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA).

Two days before the gala, I joined VOCAL NY and hundreds of other advocates at a City Hall Park rally to protest the Governor's unconscionable veto that has forced thousands of low-income New Yorkers living with HIV/AIDS to continue to live on \$11 and change a day because the remainder of their monthly income must go towards paying rent. After the rally, I, along with 17 other activists, was arrested for blocking Broadway in an act of civil disobedience. I will continue to fight on all fronts until we eliminate this dreadful and mean-spirited policy.