



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

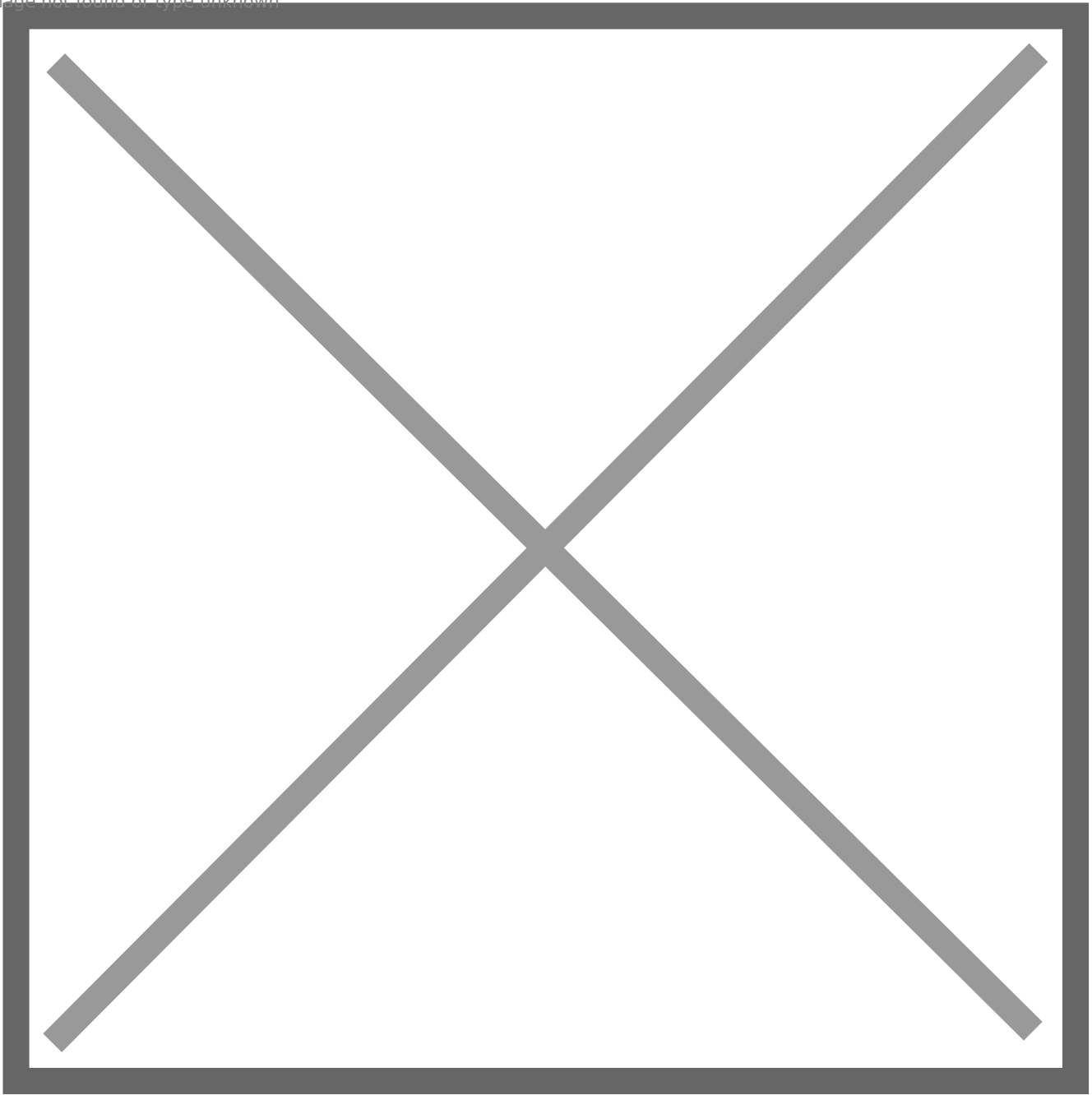
Thomas K. Duane

# **Commemorating World AIDS Day**

Thomas K. Duane

December 1, 2011

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Every December 1 since 1988, World AIDS Day has been observed around the globe. As New York State's only openly-HIV-positive State legislator, and as the representative of a district that has one of the highest rates of known HIV infections in the country, HIV/AIDS is, for me, a daily concern. However, I recognize the importance of World AIDS Day in helping to bring the HIV/AIDS pandemic – and what each individual can do to bring an end to it – into focus for the wider public.

To mark World AIDS Day 2011, I joined Watchful Eye, a community-based organization focused on getting people tested for and educated about HIV/AIDS, and

its partner New York City Faith in Action Coalition at a Meet the Leaders Lunchtime Chat. The organizations and particularly Watchful Eye's tireless founder Divinah "Dee" Bailey have been key allies in the fight to increase HIV testing and prevent new infections. The more we talk about HIV/AIDS, and the more we encourage HIV prevention and voluntary testing, then the more we remove the stigma surrounding it, and the better we are able to reduce new infections and treat those living with the disease.