



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

Lawmakers and Health Advocates Rally In Support of Legislation to Combat the Measles Crisis on World Immunization Week

SENATOR DAVID CARLUCCI April 29, 2019

| ISSUE: **MEASLES**



(Albany, NY) -- For World Immunization Week, Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester) was joined in Albany by Rockland County Executive Ed Day, fellow state lawmakers and health advocates to address the life-saving importance of vaccines and to support legislation (S.2994, S.5136) to combat the spread of Measles in New York State.

The two bills lawmakers are pushing to pass would end all non-medical vaccine exemptions and create a statewide vaccine awareness campaign to combat false information about vaccines.

Senator David Carlucci said, “We are seeing a crisis across the country with the outbreak of Measles reaching the highest level of cases in 25 years. In Brooklyn and Rockland, we have a public health emergency with the number of Measles cases rising, while inaccurate information continues to fuel anti-vaccine sentiment. If we follow the science then we know vaccines save lives. We must take immediate action and end non-medical vaccine exemptions in New York State and focus on a long-term vaccine awareness campaign.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said 704 cases of the measles have been confirmed in 22 states, making this the worst year for measles since the disease was eradicated from the country in 2000. The CDC noted the longer the outbreaks continues the greater the chance the disease will “again sustain a foothold” in the U.S.

As of today, there are 202 confirmed cases of measles in Rockland County and as of April 24th, there were 390 confirmed cases in Brooklyn and Queens.

Rockland County Executive Ed Day and Rockland County Commissioner of Health, Dr. Patricia Schnabel Ruppert traveled to Albany to call on New York State to pass legislation to end religious exemptions and urged the Federal Government to take action as well.

Rockland County Executive Ed Day said, "As a state and a nation we need to address this now. We must pass this legislation in New York and around the country. Our federal government must take action nationally to increase vaccination rates. Either through Congressional action or Presidential Executive Order. This needs to be done. Not tomorrow, not in a week, month or year. It must be done immediately. To do any less is both a disservice to and

betrayal of the people of this country."

Rockland County Commissioner of Health, Dr. Patricia Schnabel Ruppert said, "California saw a 4.7% increase in vaccination rates in kindergartners after eliminating personal belief exemptions in 2015. Legislation to end religious exemptions is exactly the type of action that needs to be taken here in New York. It is a necessary step to protect the health of the public as a whole and to protect the health of those who are unable to be immunized; infants, the immunocompromised, unimmunized pregnant women and the severely ill."

Sponsors and supporters of the bill to end religious exemptions and create a statewide awareness campaign echoed Rockland officials.

Senator Brad Hoylman (D-Manhattan) said, "Just a few decades ago, we assumed measles was defeated, but now it's roaring back. In the last couple of months, at least 600 cases have been confirmed across the city and state— most of which are in Brooklyn and Rockland County. A direct correlation can be drawn between recent outbreaks of measles and the growing number of non-medical vaccine exemptions. That's why we're calling for Albany to reject the anti-vaxxer propaganda and join California to end non-medical exemptions by passing my and Assemblymember Dinowitz's legislation (S2994/A2371) for the lifesaving vaccinations that keep our children safe and healthy."

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz (D-Bronx) said, "Even as we are in the midst of the largest measles outbreak in New York in a generation, there are still far too many people who have fallen victim to misinformation about the safety and efficacy of vaccines. The science is settled and the facts are straightforward: vaccines work and they save lives. I encourage anybody who has concerns about vaccine safety to have a frank discussion with their qualified doctor, instead of relying on poorly-sourced links being passed around anti-science groups on Facebook. The only reason somebody should not get vaccinated is for a legitimate

medical reason, and right now New York State has a giant loophole in our school vaccine requirements which essentially allow anyone to undermine this critical public health protection. I thank State Senator Carlucci and Rockland County Executive Day for their support on this important issue, especially as their communities are on the front lines of controlling the current measles outbreak.”

Senator Alessandra Biaggi (D-Bronx/Westchester) said, "When we rely on scientific fact, the conclusion is simple: vaccinations save lives. If everyone is vaccinated, then every New Yorker – from the youngest to the oldest – is protected from contracting life-threatening diseases. I am a strong supporter of legislation to repeal all non-medical exemptions from vaccination requirements for children, because I am a strong supporter of keeping our communities safe and healthy.”

Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee (D-Suffern) said, “As a member of the Assembly Health Committee, I am responsible for recognizing and supporting legislation that is in the best interest of the people of New York State. I support this legislation because immunizations are essential in preventing the outbreak of harmful viruses and keeping our community healthy and safe. While I believe in protecting the First Amendment right to freely practice one’s religion and in personal choice, an individual’s rights must be balanced with a public responsibility to protect the health of the entire population. Measles is highly contagious. This outbreak has not been contained. It is important that people get vaccinated to protect those who can’t be vaccinated for a variety of reasons, including cancer, and who therefore depend on others being vaccinated. Those with compromised immune systems, pregnant women, and infants too young to be vaccinated have a right to be out in the community without endangering their own health and well-being.”

Marc Price, DO, President of the NYS Academy of Family Physicians said, "In recognition of National Infant Immunization Week, we applaud the leadership of Senators Carlucci and

Hoylman and Assemblymembers Dinowitz and Jaffee in championing legislation to remove non-medical exemptions from child vaccine requirements for school attendance and to promote vaccine education and awareness in order to counter the dangerous misinformation about vaccines that is being propagated in our communities. Vaccines are our best defense against deadly and debilitating diseases that were once eradicated and are now making a resurgence. The science and evidence is clear that vaccines are both safe, and highly effective when at least 90-95% of our population is immunized. We look forward to working with state legislators to pursue the enactment of this lifesaving legislation this year."

According to the World Health Organization, there remains nearly 20 million unvaccinated and under-vaccinated children in the world today, which is why awareness about vaccines not only on World Immunization Week is critical.

The CDC recommends the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine for everyone over a year old, except for people who had the disease as children. People who have had the measles are immune.

RELATED LEGISLATION

2019-S2994

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- Introduced

- ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ◦ Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Relates to exemptions from vaccinations due to religious beliefs; and repeals subdivision 9 of section 2164 of the public health law relating to exemption from vaccination due to religious beliefs

January 31, 2019

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Brad Hoylman-Sigal**

Do you support this bill?

2019-S5136

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Relates to the New York state vaccination awareness campaign

April 10, 2019

In Senate Committee **Health**

Sponsored by **David Carlucci**

Do you support this bill?