



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

## Statement from State Senator Gustavo Rivera on the End of the 2019-2020 Legislative Session

GUSTAVO RIVERA June 22, 2019

| ISSUE: **END OF SESSION**

### OVERVIEW

"This legislative session was undoubtedly the most historic one I have ever been a part of. Right from the beginning of the session, we delivered sweeping reforms that New Yorkers had been demanding for years. The list is long and it included common-sense gun legislation, voting reforms, bail reform, as well as passing the Child Victims Act, GENDA, and the Reproductive Health Act. Our first priority was to demonstrate that we could govern effectively and we have proven that in spades.

It also must be said that the leadership of Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins this year has been nothing short of inspiring. With her guidance and the hard work of my colleagues, our Conference passed legislation that seeks to tear down barriers across New York State and create opportunities for all New Yorkers."

### HEALTH

"In my new role as the Chair of the Senate Health Committee, I held ten productive Health Committee meetings where more than 100 bills were moved to the next step of the

legislative process. These bills seek to improve New York State's public health as well as our State's health care delivery system.

A number of the bills I sponsored were able to pass through both houses this year. I am particularly proud that we were able to:

- Establish the New York State and New York City Maternal Mortality Review Boards and a Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Advisory Council to review the alarming maternal deaths and maternal morbidity rates affecting women across New York. (S.1819)
- Require hospitals to adopt and implement standard protocols to appropriately identify and manage obstetric hemorrhage during childbirth, which is highly preventable, but a leading cause of birth complications. (S.4498A)
- Protect the rights of New Yorkers in adult care facilities by requiring them to be fully informed about their health care services, consent or refuse such services and able to choose their own providers for care. (S.874)
- Lower the threshold for elevated blood lead level from 10 to 5 micrograms to protect children from the dangers of lead exposure, which was a key piece of Dakota's Law. (Budget)
- Increase New York's low rates of organ and tissue donation and strengthen the autonomy of donors through the passage of the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act (S.6000A)
- Ensure the NYSDOH reviews the health policies and practices implemented at DOCCS and local correctional facilities for certain high-risk populations and studies the medical staffing needs in correctional facilities. (S.1073A)

While these are a few of my achievements, the work does not stop. Among a few other important issues, I am committed to continuing working on the New York Health Act by holding additional hearings across the State in the coming months."

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM**

"While the Senate Majority Conference achieved important criminal justice victories earlier this year, we were able to build on these successes and passed legislation to further provide struggling New Yorkers with a fairer alternative to navigate our criminal justice system. I'm proud that both the Senate and the Assembly passed my bill to expand charitable bail organizations. While we work to eliminate cash bail once for all, this bill will help more New Yorkers avoid spending unnecessary time behind bars while awaiting trial.

We also decriminalized small amounts of marijuana and established procedures for record expungements both retroactively and for future convictions. While we work towards the full legalization of marijuana, this legislation is a big step forward in reducing the impact of the overcriminalization of communities of color.

As we celebrate these victories, we must also remember that we fell short in ending the torture of solitary confinement in New York State and need to continue to work to pass HALT. While we have a commitment that administrative changes will be implemented to reduce the use of solitary confinement in our correctional facilities, this loss is incredibly disappointing. We need to end the physical and mental torture that is solitary confinement, which has taken the lives of too many individuals, including my constituent Kalief Browder. I am committed to working with advocates and my colleagues to make it a top priority during the next legislative session."

## **HOUSING**

"I am incredibly proud that the Senate Majority Conference passed the most pro-tenant, affordable housing legislation in New York State's history. As a representative of the district with the second highest number of rent-regulated units in the state, these newly enacted reforms will truly protect my constituents and help them stay in their homes.

I am incredibly proud of this achievement as thousands of residents of the 33rd Senate District and tenants across New York State will greatly benefit."

### **STANDING UP FOR IMMIGRANTS**

"New York State has always been a beacon of hope for those who have left their countries of origin in search of a brighter future for themselves and their families. While the federal government continues to deliberately implement malicious policies to dehumanize and tear our communities apart, New York must never waiver in our commitment to provide them the support they need to thrive.

The Senate Majority Conference has demonstrated at length that New York State cares about its immigrant communities by enacting policies that will ensure they are provided the protections they deserve. I am proud that we passed the DREAM Act, the SCAR Act to report on the number of unaccompanied minors in foster care in New York State, and GreenLight NY which will allow undocumented immigrants to apply for driver's licenses, improving road safety and making it possible for hard-working immigrants to get where they need to go."