



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Senator Sanders and the NYS Legislature Passes Legislation to Extend and Enhance Article 15-A

JAMES SANDERS JR. June 21, 2019



Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway), joined by his Senate colleagues earlier this week, voted to extend Article 15-A until 2024. Article 15-A of the Executive Law, signed into law on July 19, 1988, authorized the creation of an Office of Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBE). This law was created to promote employment and participation in state contracts for minorities and women.

“This is a huge win for MWBE,” said Senator Sanders, **Chairman of the Senate Task Force on MWBE**

. “We are continuing to move in a direction where all minorities and women will have access to resources they were barred from before.”

The current law expired at the end of this year and needed to be reauthorized before the completion of the 2019 legislative session. The MWBE program is important because for far too long, minorities and women have been negatively impacted by an economic system built to exclude them. This updated bill is designed to even the playing field where access to state contracts are concerned.

Before the bill went to a vote, Senator Sanders spent months working closely with MWBEs to craft legislation that would advance their goals. Additionally, he collaborated with the MWBE Taskforce to ensure that MWBEs would see these goals would be met.

The biggest wins MWBE saw in the updated bill are: (1) a shortened certification process from 60 to 45 days, (2) increase of personal net worth from \$3.5 million to \$15 million, (3) increase in discretionary buying threshold, and (4) agency publication of waivers.

All of these improvements will have an immediate and extremely important impact on minorities and women. In addition to these necessary improvements, Senator Sanders, the Senate, alongside Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte—who pushed MWBE through on the Assembly side— were able to get many other changes including transparency throughout the certification and bidding process.

“We have had a very long history where people, specifically minorities and women, simply did not get their fair share of contracts, contracts that tax payers pay for,” said Senator John Liu, **a member on the Task Force**. “That’s why we not only have to extend 15-A, but enhance it in a way that will really bring us closer more quickly to the day where every business owner

can have equal opportunity.”

Democrats and Republicans expressed their admiration and acknowledgement of all the work Senator Sanders has done to further the MWBE program. Article 15-A has come a long way since its inception. As we continue to forge ahead, we need to consistently push for equal economic opportunities for all.