



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Simcha Felder

## Felder-Paulin Bill Creates Crohn's & Colitis ID Card, Improves Enforcement of Crohn's and Colitis Fairness Act

SIMCHA FELDER July 31, 2020



The NYS legislature unanimously passed 2 legislative measures sponsored by Senator Simcha Felder and Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, improving implementation and enforcement of the landmark Crohn's and Colitis Fairness Act.

"Coping with an illness is hard enough, without adding indignity. This card is a common sense way to educate business employees of their responsibilities under the Crohn's and Colitis Fairness Act, and prevent the need to explain or argue over qualifying conditions,"

explained Senator Felder. “People protected by the law will now be ensured that their complaints to state or local consumer protection bureaus will be addressed appropriately.”

“The ID card is a small way that we can decrease the burden on people with Crohn’s and similar conditions and make it easier for them to exercise their legal right to use the restroom. If a business doesn’t comply, there is a clear avenue for filing complaints,” said Assemblywoman Paulin. “No one should be forced to endure a humiliating situation simply because they have a medical condition over which they have no control.”

"Only a few years ago the topic of Crohn's and Colitis was taboo, nobody talked about it and people who were diagnosed felt like they suffered alone. Today, thanks to a lot of outreach and advocacy things have changed drastically and members of our support group number in the thousands. Everyone with Crohn’s disease faces this problem once, twice, three times a year, some almost every day” said Yoely Drummer, Founder and Executive Director of the Jewish Crohn's and Colitis Support Group. “when I got involved into this cause back in 2013, I had times I felt that I am alone, we had Assemblywoman Paulin supporting us all along, but we were missing our support in State Senate. Until I met Senator Felder and he offered us full support and took the Crohn’s and Colitis fairness act to the next level with improving the enforcement. this law means that we can all have an easier life.”

[According to the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation](#), as many as 1.6 million Americans suffer from the chronic, incurable gastro-intestinal conditions that significantly affect health and quality of life. Conditions causing debilitating urgency to use a restroom limit the lives of otherwise capable, contributing members of society. When public restrooms are not available, providing access to employee-only facilities is a small accommodation with an outsized impact.

Originally enacted in 2017, the Crohn's and Colitis Fairness Act allows access to employee-only restrooms by individuals with Crohn's, Colitis, or other similar conditions, in any business open to the public during business hours, if there are at least two employees present at the time. In practice, however, these rights have proven hard to access. Businesses were unfamiliar with the new law and employees had no way of confirming an eligible medical condition.

The State Legislature acted on two bills to improve this landmark law:

- Senate Bill 6226 (A.8146), requires that the NYS Health Department offer an identification card to people with qualifying gastrointestinal diseases which verifies their condition and details their rights under the Crohn's and Colitis Fairness Act.
- Senate Bill 7211 (A.8821) helps impacted individuals redress and resolve violations by giving state and local consumer protection departments the power and duty to address complaints from any individual about a violation of the Crohn's and Colitis Fairness Act.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### 2019-S7211

- 
- 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

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Relates to denial of access to an employee toilet facility

January 10, 2020

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Simcha Felder**

Do you support this bill?