



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

Donate Blood For Those Who Can't: Senator Brad Hoylman and New York Blood Center Host Blood Drive

BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL October 20, 2020

| ISSUE: **SD 27, LGBTQ RIGHTS, FDA**

NEW YORK -- On October 26 from 1 PM to 7 PM, Senator Brad Hoylman and the New York Blood Center will hold a blood drive in the West Village at 57 Bethune St. (Westbeth Gallery). Hoylman, currently the only openly gay member of the New York State Senate, cannot donate blood himself because of a discriminatory and outdated policy by the FDA which restricts blood donations from some LGBTQIA+ community members who have not been abstinent for three months. The drive, named Donate Blood For Those Who Cannot, will help with critical blood shortages in New York during the COVID-19 pandemic and raise awareness of the ongoing restrictions on LGBTQIA+ blood donation. To attend this blood drive, New Yorkers must reserve a spot ahead of time here:

https://donate.nybc.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/285491

Senator Brad Hoylman said: “Even during a severe blood shortage due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the FDA clings to outdated policies that prevent me and other members of the LGBTQIA+ community from donating blood. This policy is rooted in homophobia, not in science. While the FDA’s new requirement of only three months of celibacy is better than a full year, it perpetuates a stigma that LGBTQIA+ community members are disease carriers, and does not reflect that modern HIV testing technology can detect any HIV infection that

occured 10-14 days before the donation.

Letting all LGBTQIA+ Americans donate blood would lead to a 4% increase in the blood supply—around 615,000 additional donations. Based on FDA claims that each donation saves three lives, allowing all LGBTQIA+ Americans to donate blood could save more than one million lives.

We need the FDA to change their policy. Until that happens, we need LGBTQ allies to step up and give on behalf of our community to meet the current blood shortage. So please come, donate blood for those who can't, and help us save lives while we fight injustice.”

This March, Senator Hoylman sent a [letter to the FDA](#) asking for a changing of the rules that require some LGBTQIA+ Americans to be abstinent for a year before donating blood.

Subsequently, the FDA loosened restrictions, allowing LGBTQIA+ community members to donate blood after three months of abstinence. Despite that change Hoylman was still rejected from donating blood in May, and Hoylman [subsequently sent another](#) letter to FDA asking to end the celibacy requirement entirely, as is the case in nations like Mexico, Italy, Argentina and South Africa. This drive was inspired by a similar effort from California State Senator Scott Wiener.

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in New York, there have been serious shortages in blood supplies and donations throughout the state, which has resulted in an urgent need for blood donations. Senator Hoylman encourages those who are willing and eligible to consider donating.

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