**For Immediate Release**

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**Senator Parker Protects Student Metro Cards**

*Ensuring the children from low income families have access to high quality education*

(Albany, NY) Friday June 18th- Senator Kevin Parker (D-21), in partnerships with The Senate Democratic Majority has achieved a major victory for New York children and families by securing $25 million in state funding for a reduced fare student Metro Card program.

A budget agreement between the MTA, city and state will prevent cuts to the program and continue to provide students access to reduced-fare transit.

“This is a triumph for low income families who now do not have to worry about the cost of transpiration costs when selecting a school” said Senator Parker

Under the agreement, the state will pay $25.3 million to fund the program in addition to a city contribution. The MTA will cover the remaining costs. All students who were eligible for reduced fare Metro Cards during the previous school year will continue to receive the benefit starting this September.

The $25 million in state funding is contingent upon the NYC Department of Education’s receipt of the reduced fare student Metro Cards from the MTA.

Facing a massive deficit, the MTA had proposed full elimination of the program, which would have affected the more than 500,000 New York City students who use the reduced fare Metro Cards to travel to and from public school.

"Today, we kept our promise to New York's children by protecting their access to a reliable and affordable means of mass transit. While the benefits of a quality education are priceless, the cost of transportation for our students should remain affordable. I would like to thank Governor Paterson, Speaker Silver, and my Senate colleagues, in particular Senators Martin Malavé Dilan and Joe Addabbo for their tireless advocacy on behalf of students,” said Senate Majority Conference Leader John L. Sampson.

It is expected that the legislation containing the agreement will be acted upon early next week.

**About Senator Parker**

Senator Parker represents Brooklyn’s 21st Senate District, which encompasses Flatbush, East Flatbush, Kensington, Ditmas Park, Midwood and Borough Park, Senator Kevin Parker has been an outspoken advocate for the 311,000 constituents he serves. Since his election into the Senate in 2002, Senator Parker has remained committed to fighting for equitable rights for all, ensuring that his diverse district obtains necessary resources to help grow and sustain small businesses, higher education, and highlighting HIV/AIDS awareness.

Senator Parker is the Majority Whip & serves on several Senate committees, including Codes; Commerce, Economic Development and Small Business; Finance, and the New American Task Force. Having solid roots in Central Brooklyn, and having lived and gone to junior and high schools in his district, Sen. Parker’s commitment to the lives of his neighbors and constituents is his primary objective. Not only does Sen. Parker have the distinction of being the youngest African American elected into the state senate but he has also been recognized for his commitment to public service with the Legislative Leadership award.

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