

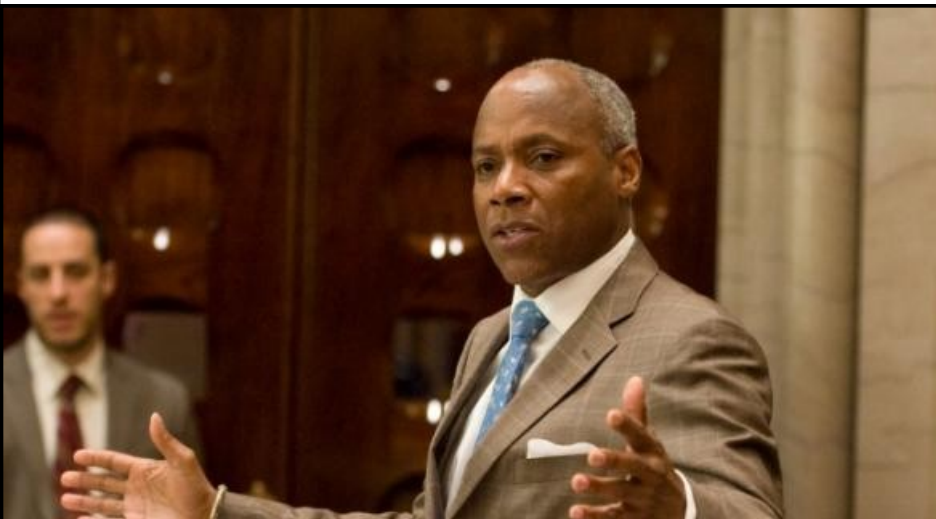


NEWSBEAT...

Newsletter from the Office of
Senator Bill Perkins

No. 22 - JUNE 28, 2010

New York State Senator Bill Perkins and Fellow Democrats Announce Senior Citizen Center Funds Restored by NY Senate Emergency Community Meeting & Letter To Commissioner Plays Key Role



The good news is that the Senate voted to restore 18 million dollars in Title 20 Funding to the budget. According to the Mayor, the loss of this funding is what precipitated the cuts to our Senior Centers.

The bad news is that so many cuts were proposed for my district in the first place. Of the 16 centers proposed for closure in Manhattan, 13 were in Northern Manhattan and 11 were in the 30th Senatorial district which I serve. I hosted an emergency meeting with other elected officials, in my office on Friday, June 4th. Representatives from my district's senior centers attended and gave valuable input as to how seniors would be served, should their centers be closed. Center users and managers questioned the formula used by DFTA to assess if a center would be closed, and pointed out some of the broader services provided by the centers beyond serving meals.

These centers provide a social network and social services. Many seniors referred to them as "a home away from home". In the summer they serve as "cooling centers" which the NYC of Office of the Mayor and the Department of Health recommend to seniors to save money, keep out of the heat and ultimately save their lives. In addition, to providing meals, social and cultural enrichment, various agencies and organizations have used the senior centers as a place to share important information to this isolated population. In March of 2010 the US Census reached more than a million seniors through senior center networks, to give them pertinent census information. Census outreach teams have indicated the large numbers of early returns of census forms received from this demographic population is a direct result of this kind of outreach.

In 2005 Harlem was identified as a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC), a commu-

nity in which senior citizens living alone, without family nearby, face the threat of premature retirement into an assisted living or nursing home facility. Having social networks like local senior citizen centers, provides the extra support that elderly residents need to age in place.

In my letter to the Commissioner, in which I included petitions with over 3500 signatures (collected by Citizens Care Senior Program), I expressed my hope that in the future we would not find it necessary to make cuts that affect our most vulnerable residents. But if there must be cuts they should be done fairly across the board, with sensitivity to the needs of this special population. Any decisions should include the input of the providers, seniors and community to assure the least amount of harm is done.

Sincerely,

**Bill Perkins, State Senator
30th Senatorial District**