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**Testimony Regarding Student Privacy (Resolution No. 1768)
before the Committee on Education of the New York City Council**

New York State Senator Brad Hoylman

September 30, 2013

Thank you Chair Jackson and members of the Committee on Education. I represent New York State's 27th Senate District, which includes the neighborhoods of Clinton/Hell's Kitchen, Chelsea, Greenwich Village, the Upper West Side, Midtown/East Midtown, the East Village and Lower East Side, as well as 21 public elementary schools, 5 public middle schools, and 39 public high schools.

I greatly appreciate your holding this hearing on student privacy, an issue extremely important to me and the families in my district. I'd also like to thank my colleagues in the State Legislature, Assembly Member O'Donnell and Senator Grisanti, for introducing state legislation (A.6059/S.4284), of which I am co-sponsor, that would generally prohibit the release of students' personally identifiable information to third parties without parental consent.

I share the serious concerns I have heard from constituents who were very disturbed to learn earlier this year that the New York State Education Department (NYSED) planned to share confidential student data with the non-profit corporation inBloom Inc., with which NYSED contracted to provide a K-12 student database. News reports suggested that for-profit companies and other commercial vendors could have access to this data, and that inBloom, Inc. cannot guarantee the security of the information stored. This risk -- with inBloom, Inc. or any other outside entity -- is unacceptable.

I recognize the potential benefits of integrating technology and education. That said, I strongly believe that our state must not proceed with any initiatives, however well-intentioned, that could compromise the privacy of our public school students without giving parents an opportunity to make informed decisions about their children's

participation. In fact, five of nine states that originally planned to participate in the student information-sharing plan with inBloom, Inc. have officially withdrawn the proposals amid privacy concerns. New York should do the same.

Frankly, as the father of a young child who will soon enter the public school system in the coming years, I do not believe that any educational value derived from the sharing of students' personally identifiable information is worth the risks of its potential misuse or leakage. Further, I believe there are ways school systems can harness technology for curriculum tracking, overall student progress assessment, and for the application or qualification for federal funds, without the disclosure of students' personally identifying information.

In order to adequately protect students' privacy rights, I believe it is vital that the State Legislature and the Governor pass A.6059/S.4284. I am proud to be a co-sponsor of this important bill and thank the Council for considering this resolution.

Thank you for allowing me to present testimony and for your consideration of my remarks.