



NEWS FROM SENATOR SIMCHA FELDER

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Felder and Colton: Our Pledge of Allegiance Belongs to the American People

The New York State Senate, today, unanimously passed legislation (S3241) introduced by Senator Simcha Felder (D-Brooklyn) and sponsored in the Assembly (A3108) by Assemblyman William Colton (D-Brooklyn) that allows anyone to say the Pledge of Allegiance or sing the National Anthem at any location in New York City without requiring a permit.

“The Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem belong to the people. They are deep-rooted symbols of patriotism, honor and pride and their expression should be unrestricted and unimpeded,” stated Senator Felder.

In April 2016 a group of young students from North Carolina traveled to New York City with their choir teacher for a special trip that culminated in a visit to the 9/11 Memorial. Moved by the emotions the hallowed space at Ground Zero inspired, they spontaneously gathered to sing a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem. They were stopped midway by security personnel, invoking the need for a permit, and captured on video that later went viral.

Currently, the law qualifies public expression of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag or the National Anthem as a public gathering for which a permit is required. The Felder-Colton legislation amends city law to protect this expression from any requirements, fines, assessments or sanctions.

“I was shocked by the realization that just saying the Pledge of Allegiance or singing the National Anthem requires a permit. Some things are sacred and should be protected,” said Felder. “It is my hope that this legislation will preserve the right of any individual or group, wherever or whenever, to express their patriotism and love of country freely.”

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