New York State AIDS Housing Bill Passes Assembly

January 13, 2010

A bill that would reduce housing cost for more than 11,000 HIV-positive New Yorkers living in government-subsidized housing passed the State Assembly by a vote of 82 to 54, timesunion.com reports.

The bill passed the Senate last year following a fervent speech by HIV-positive Manhattan Senator Tom Duane. According to the article, because the bill passed the two chambers in different years, it must be reconsidered by the Senate before it can be signed into law by Governor David Paterson, who has already voiced support for the legislation.

New York City–based AIDS service organization Housing Works called the Assembly vote "an incredible victory," but some city officials were not enthused.

"Earlier today, the Assembly passed the first bill of the legislative session, which blows a $15 million hole in the city budget," Michelle Goldstein, Mayor Michael Bloomberg's chief Albany lobbyist, said in a statement. "Make no mistake: This city stands second to none in its support of programs that provide critical assistance to those living with HIV/AIDS. But Albany's addiction to unfunded mandates and not giving city taxpayers the money to meet those requirements must end. We cannot bemoan budget deficits one day and add to them the next. This legislative session demands austerity."

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