



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** Res 1983-2009, **Version:** \*

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Res. No. 1983

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign H.R. 179, the Community AIDS and Hepatitis Prevention Act, to lift the ban on federal funds for Syringe Exchange Programs to reduce the transmission of blood-borne pathogens, including HIV and viral hepatitis.

By Council Members Mendez, Palma, Brewer, Dickens, James, Mealy, Sanders Jr. and Weprin

Whereas, In the United States, each year approximately 8,000 Americans contract HIV/AIDS and 15,000 Americans contract the Hepatitis C virus, directly or indirectly from sharing contaminated syringes; and

Whereas, Of the total HIV/AIDS cases nationally, nearly one-third are attributed to injection drug use (IDU), while 60 percent of all Hepatitis C cases are attributed to IDU; and

Whereas, Since 1988, the federal government has imposed a ban on federal dollars being spent on syringe exchange programs (SEPs); and

Whereas, Despite this prohibition, 36 states have independently funded these types of programs recognizing the contribution of reducing the spread of these viruses and the inherent public health value; and

Whereas, A federal government review of SEPs has also revealed that these programs reduce the number of new HIV infections and do not lead to an increase in drug use among injection drug users; and

Whereas, Additionally, SEPs are cost effective, as the cost of prevention programs is significantly less than the total cost of lifetime treatment of an individual with HIV; and

Whereas, In New York City, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)

implemented SEPs beginning in 1988, to reduce the spread of HIV among IDUs; and

Whereas, DOHMH recently announced that nearly one-fifth of New Yorkers are exposing themselves to greater risk of HIV by having multiple sexual partners and injecting drugs; and

Whereas, While the number of injection drug users who have HIV has decreased from the 1990s, the virus is still common among this vulnerable population; and

Whereas, DOHMH currently offers SEPs in nearly 30 neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs; and

Whereas, President Barack Obama has expressed support for lifting the federal ban on SEPs, as part of his HIV/AIDS prevention plan; and

Whereas, Through the passage of H.R. 179, the Community AIDS and Hepatitis Prevention Act, the country can implement a more comprehensive, evidence-based approach to combating the spread of these viruses; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign H.R. 179, the Community AIDS and Hepatitis Prevention Act, to lift the ban on federal funds for Syringe Exchange Programs to reduce the transmission of blood-borne pathogens, including HIV and viral hepatitis.

JM  
LS# 7402  
May 11, 2009