

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FERRER CREATES BI-PARTISAN COALITION TO SUPPORT  
WATER RATE RELIEF FOR SENIORS SPONSORED BY CARROZZA  
IN ASSEMBLY, VELELLA IN SENATE, DiBRIENZA IN COUNCIL**

Borough President Fernando Ferrer, Bronx State Senator Guy Velella, Queens Assembly Member Ann Margaret Carrozza and Brooklyn City Council Member Stephen DiBrienza announced a bi-partisan effort today to provide relief to senior citizens who face escalating water bills. At a City Hall news conference, Ferrer, Carrozza and DiBrienza urged the Mayor, Governor and State legislators to support pending State legislation to reduce the burden on lower income seniors when they pay their water bills to the City Water Board.

DiBrienza sponsors City Council legislation supporting the State measure developed by Ferrer and Carrozza and sponsored in the State Senate by Velella. The elected officials, noting support across the City for their Senior Citizen rate relief legislation, passed by the Assembly as the session ended, were joined at the news conference by representatives of such organizations as the Council of Senior Centers and Services, which represents 335 senior centers and other community-based services for the elderly throughout the five boroughs. Other supporters include the Queens Civic Congress, a coalition of 97 civic, homeowner, co-op and tenant associations, the Bronx Regional Interagency Council on the Aging, the Manhattan Interagency Council on the Aging, the Queens Interagency Council on the Aging, Manhattan Community Board 3, Queens Community Boards 8 and 9, Brooklyn Community Board 11 and Bronx Community Boards 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 12.

Ferrer said, "Today at City Hall, I join with Assembly Member Ann Carrozza, Council Member Steve DiBrienza, and Senator Guy Velella, and community leaders to call on the State Legislature to enact this bill into law." Ferrer unveiled the state legislation with Carrozza last September at Queens' Clearview Senior Center.

“I began work on this Senior Citizen rate relief measure after looking at the impact of water rate increases over the last 15 years,” said Ferrer. “The impact of water rate increases over the last 15 years demonstrates the need for rate relief for seniors living on modest and low incomes. The 4 percent rate increase last year hiked the average annual water charges for a single family to \$450. This compares with \$140 in 1985.”

Carrozza, a member of the Assembly Committee on Aging, who is an elder-law attorney, said, “This increased financial burden creates a compelling need to provide assistance to people 65 or older with incomes below the Senior Citizens Homeowners Exemption (SCHE) maximum of \$27,000 to help offset the ever increasing water rates.”

“The legislation would mirror SCHE for owner-occupied units and SCRIE for renter-occupied units,” said Vellella. “The City Department for the Aging would administer the Senior Citizen Rent Adjustment on Water Rates as it does with SCRIE. The City Department of Finance will administer the Senior Citizen Rent Adjustment on Water Rates for owner-occupied units as it does with SCHE.”

“Our bill would create a mechanism to provide for water rate relief similar to the existing SCHE and SCRIE (Senior Citizens Rent Increase Exemption) programs,” said DiBrienza.

“Most of the cost of the New York City water and sewer system involves capital construction,” said Ferrer. “Most other municipal water systems do not rely on water charges to pay capital costs. In recognition of this difference, this program uses tax funds to finance water rate relief.”