

# LDA

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## MEMO IN SUPPORT April 27, 2009

### **A7571/S2512--An act to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to the recycling, reuse and safe handling of electronic equipment sold in the state of New York**

One in seven New Yorkers has a Learning Disability. A learning disability is a neurobiological disorder, meaning there are differences in brain structure and/or function in a person who has learning disabilities. These differences lead to difficulty in learning.

Exposure to environmental toxins is the single largest preventable cause of learning disabilities. Improper disposal of electronic equipment leads to environmental contamination with potent neurotoxins found in electronic equipment, such as televisions, computers, monitors, etc. These include heavy metals, such as lead and mercury, and other chemicals linked with neurological harm, such as brominated flame-retardants. This Legislation would establish an electronic equipment recycling and reuse program to reduce exposures by children and other vulnerable persons to these neuro-poisons as a result of environmental contamination.

The impact of learning disabilities on our society and culture is enormous. Over half of the detainees in Juvenile detention facilities have a learning disability. Up to 60% of adolescents in treatment for substance abuse have learning disabilities. 48% of those with learning disabilities are out of the workforce or unemployed. 50% of females with learning disabilities will be mothers (many of them single) within 3-5 years of leaving high school. 44 percent of the TANF (welfare) population were found to have a learning disability. 31% of students with learning disabilities will be arrested 3-5 years out of high school.

While the mission of LDANYS is closely associated with advocacy for appropriate supports and services for persons with learning disabilities, we also strongly support policies and practices that help **prevent** learning and other developmental disabilities. This legislation will take an important step towards the prevention of such disabilities by helping to remove hazardous toxics from the environment. The Learning Disabilities Association of New York State therefore supports this bill, and urges that it be enacted into law.