

LDA

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**Chartered by the Board
of Regents of the
University of the State of
New York as a Non-
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Education, Medical,
Social and Research
Needs.**

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MEMO IN SUPPORT

April 9, 2010

A.7937-C (Engelbright)/S.4983-C (Foley)-- Prohibits the use of certain toxic chemicals for lawn and grounds maintenance at schools and day care centers.

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, such as pesticides, is the single largest preventable cause of learning disabilities. 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.

Children are especially vulnerable to environmental toxins, and the incidence of learning disability and other neurological impairments such as autism continue to rise at an alarming rate. It is essential that government take prudent measures to ensure the public health by initiating a process to protect children from the worst of these chemical hazards. Prohibiting use of harmful pesticides on school playfields is a prudent measure that will help assure protection of schoolchildren and all who work in schools and daycare centers.

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 minimize exposure to harmful chemicals by vulnerable children. The Learning Disabilities Association of New York State therefore supports this bill, and urges that it be enacted into law.