

STATE SENATOR • GILDA Z. JACOBS • 14TH DISTRICT

Jacobs Press Release

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Meisner and Jacobs Attend Bill Signing For Law To Help Crohn's Sufferers *Family that encouraged legislation watch as Governor signs bill*

LANSING- Former State Representative Andy Meisner (D-Oakland County) and State Senator Gilda Z. Jacobs (D- Huntington Woods) watched today along with the Sklar family as Governor Jennifer Granholm signed legislation to help patients with Crohn's disease and other medical conditions by allowing them to use retailers' restroom facilities while protecting retailers from legal liability. House Bill 5046, now Public Act 469, was sponsored by former Rep. Andy Meisner. Senator Jacobs helped win its passage in the Senate.

“There are Michigan citizens who are suffering and who are deprived of the opportunity to engage in commerce and that poses a problem for our retail establishments, who are also suffering,” said Meisner. **“The Restroom Access Act is a win-win situation for everyone.”**

Attending the ceremonial bill signing was Jill and Joel Sklar and their son, Jonah. Mrs. Sklar brought this problem to the attention of former Representative Meisner and Senator Jacobs. She continued advocating for the bill and educating legislators and others during the six years it took to win approval for the legislation. Michigan was the first state to introduce this legislation. Six states have passed similar laws modeled on the Michigan bill. Similar legislation is pending in 12 other states.

“This legislation is a great example of how we can improve the quality of life for so many Michiganders without costing the taxpayers anything,” said Sen. Jacobs. **“I am very proud that Michigan now has this law on the books.”**

The bill would grant access to employee restrooms for people with eligible medical conditions and when authorized by a document signed by a physician, such as a prescription form. Employee restrooms would be available to qualified people when a restroom is not normally available to the public. In exchange for this access, businesses would be provided greater protection against torts than businesses with public bathrooms, in the event that a customer is injured or killed as a result of granting access to the employee restroom. The Restroom Access Act ensures that current employee-only restrooms do not need to be modified to accommodate those public guests who may require its use.

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Cut-line for attached photo: Sen. Jacobs, former State Representative Andy Meisner, and the Sklar family with Governor Jennifer Granholm on Feb. 12, 2009 at the ceremonial bill signing for House Bill 5046. Left to right: Jill Sklar, Jonah Sklar, former Rep. Meisner,

Gov. Granholm, Sen. Jacobs, and Joel Sklar.

Senator Gilda Jacobs represents the 14th Senate District, which includes Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak Township, Southfield and Southfield Township. She is the Minority Vice Chair of the Campaign & Election Oversight, Families & Human Services and Finance committees. She is a member of the Economic Development & Regulatory Reform and Health Policy committees. She can be reached toll-free in Lansing at 1-888-937-4453.