

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

**Steve Stern**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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**LEGISLATOR STEVE STERN AND COUNTY EXECUTIVE STEVE BELLONE “LIGHT IT UP BLUE” FOR AUTISM AWARENESS**

*H. Lee Dennison building is illuminated with blue lights to promote autism awareness in Suffolk County*



*Above: Legislator Steve Stern and Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone applaud 13-year-old Nova Shek during the bill signing of Legislator Stern’s “Light it up Blue” for Autism Awareness legislation.*

*Left: Legislator Steve Stern, County Executive Steve Bellone and the Shek family are joined by autism awareness advocates as the H. Lee Dennison building is illuminated in blue on April 2, World Autism Awareness Day.*

**HUNTINGTON, NY** – Legislator Steve Stern (D-Huntington, 16<sup>th</sup> L.D) marked Autism Awareness Month by lighting up the Suffolk County H. Lee Dennison building with blue lights after his “Light it up Blue” legislation was signed into law by County Executive Steve Bellone on April 2, World Autism Awareness Day.

Legislator Stern was inspired to “Light it up Blue” for Autism Awareness after receiving a letter from 13-year-old Nova Shek of Dix Hills, who wrote to him about her younger brother with autism. Moved by Nova’s enthusiasm about her mission to raise autism awareness, Legislator Stern wrote legislation to illuminate the

Suffolk County H. Lee Dennison building in blue for one week each and every April starting April 2, 2015. The legislation passed unanimously in the Suffolk County Legislature March 24, 2015.

Autism is the fastest growing developmental disability affecting as many as one in every 68 children born in the United States. The “Light it up Blue” campaign encourages people to switch out their regular light bulbs for blue ones to show their support for people and families with autism.

Legislator Stern previously passed legislation marking the Month of April as Autism Awareness Month in Suffolk County in 2007.

“I’m proud to stand with so many of our families in Suffolk County who have loved ones with autism and I am especially pleased to support the efforts of a special young lady, Nova Shek, who proves that one small voice can make a world of difference for others,” Legislator Steve Stern said.

“Autism has affected many of our families within Suffolk County and while there is no known cause or cure for Autism, public awareness of the condition is a key component for the dissemination of information relating to ongoing scientific research, educational opportunities, early warning signs, and treatment options available to affected families. I am happy to partner with Legislator Stern and the advocate families to continue to raise awareness of autism. Let’s go Blue,” County Executive Steve Bellone said.

The blue lights will shine this year until April 9.