

HUDSON COUNTY VOICES

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Time to vote to protect Liberty State Park

There seems to be hardly a time when the specter of privatization doesn't hang ominously over beautiful Liberty State Park. This ongoing threat possibly puts at risk some of the benefits visitors have always enjoyed.

The dedicated work of past visionaries have made LSP a true park for all people seeking a healthy break from everyday work routines. Its pristine acres offer healthy relaxation, recreation, sports, picnic areas, nature trails, boating, kiddie fun and more. So why should any part of this beautiful "free and green" concept give way to developers who simply study our park with the proverbial dollar signs in their eyes.

But park advocates have dealt with and strongly resisted the planners and schemers before. The Friends of Liberty State Park and its president, Sam Pesin, plus coalitions of concerned organizations have swiftly answered the call and defended this special place against radical change. The would-be invaders have thus far come up empty.

The question is: Why must park advocates frequently find themselves in a battle with those who would forsake the present culture and character of Liberty State Park? How can there be protection against privatization and commercialization? Help in the past has been successfully sought and received from newspapers, the public and several caring elected officials. Great, but why does the need remain to rush to battle stations as each critical emergency arises? Fortunately, there is at last an easier way to deal with all such crises. The LSP Protection Act is the answer.

Assembly bill A-4903 (Speaker Craig Coughlin) and Senate bill S-3357 (Stephen Sweeney, pres.) and the LSP Protection Act will together give this beloved park steadfast protection against those who would drastically alter it. We urge these state legislators

to post the LSP Protection Act and give it enthusiastic support. Let our healthy and beautiful park remain as an oasis amid all the grey and industrial city surroundings. We need your vital vote to ward off the regular parade of special interests set on privatizing the land for their own gain.

Right now, LSP looks beautiful in its various shades of green and burgeoning plant life. It welcomes both active and passive visitors. You can enjoy its facilities for much of the day whether in a group or by yourself. There is no one selling tickets for use of any of these healthful facilities. It's all free. Come right in.

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