

AFRICANS IN POLITICAL OFFICE

New York Governor Paterson

David A Paterson JD, New York's 55th Governor, was sworn into office in Albany, the capital city of New York State, on March 17, 2008.

In 1985 Governor Paterson was elected to represent Harlem in the New York State Senate. In 2003, he became the first non-white legislative leader in New York's history when he was elevated to Minority Leader of the Senate.

In 2004, Governor Paterson, who is legally blind, was the first visually impaired person to address the Democratic National Convention and in 2007, he was New York's first African- American Lieutenant Governor.

Governor Paterson was born May 20, 1954 in Brooklyn, New York to Portia and Basil Paterson, the first non-white Secretary of State in New York and the first African-American Vice-Chair of the National Democratic Party.

Governor Paterson is trained in history (BA, Columbia University, 1977) and a law (JD, Hofstra Law School, 1982).

Summarized by MJoTA Staff from
<http://www.state.ny.us/governor>

Governor Paterson Signs Family Health Care Decisions Act Into Law

LEGISLATION ALLOWS NEW YORKERS TO MAKE HEALTH CARE DECISIONS FOR INCAPACITATED FAMILY MEMBERS

The Family Health Care Decisions Act (FHCDA) allows family members to make health care decisions, including decisions about the withholding or

withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment, on behalf of patients who lose their ability to make such decisions and have not prepared advance directives regarding their wishes.

The legislation establishes a protocol for healthcare practitioners to determine whether a patient in a general hospital or nursing home has decision-making capacity. Various safeguards are required under the FHCDA to prevent inappropriate decisions, including procedures for a patient, family member or physician to assert objections to the selection of a particular person as a surrogate or to a decision made by a surrogate.

Without a statute such as the FHCDA, the common law of New York State provides that life-sustaining treatment cannot be withdrawn or withheld from an individual who has lost the capacity to make such decisions, unless clear and convincing evidence can be produced to show that the individual would have declined treatment if competent. An advance directive, such as a living will or a health care proxy, can serve as clear and convincing evidence of a patient's wishes.

The FHCDA does not apply to individuals without decision-making capacity if health care decisions for these individuals can be made under other laws or regulations.

New Yorkers are still encouraged to prepare a health care proxy, which allows an agent to make health care decisions on behalf of an individual if he or she later loses capacity. The proxy form can be tailored to give the agent as much or as little authority as the individual desires. If the principal's wishes regarding the administration of artificial nutrition and hydration are not known, the agent may not make decisions regarding such measures.

The health care proxy form authorized by the Public

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Governor Paterson speaks at Veterans Day Rally in New York City immediately before wreaths were laid in memory of Americans who were killed during war. Photos Dr SJ Dodgson.

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Health Law and instructions on completing the form are available on the Department of Health's website at: <http://www.health.state.ny.us/professionals/>.

Summarized from press release on March 16, 2010 from <http://www.state.ny.us/governor>

New York Governor Honors United States Military War Dead

Governor David A. Paterson has directed that flags on New York State government buildings be flown at half-staff on Thursday, April 8, in honor of Buffalo native and Marine Sergeant Frank World who died in Afghanistan on April 1.

Sergeant World died while supporting combat operations in Helmand Province. He was assigned to the 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion of the 2nd Marine Division, II Expeditionary Force, based at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

"On behalf of all New Yorkers, I wish to express my sympathy to the friends, family, and fellow Marines of Sergeant World," Governor Paterson said. "We mourn his passing but will forever honor his service to our country and the United States Marine Corps."

Governor Paterson has directed the flags on all State buildings to be lowered to half-staff in honor and tribute to our State's service members who are killed in action or die in a combat zone.

Press release, April 5, 2010 from <http://www.state.ny.us/governor>

Statement from Governor David A Paterson Regarding the Earthquake in Haiti

"On behalf of all New Yorkers, I extend our deepest sympathies to those affected by yesterday's earthquake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. As details continue to emerge from this devastating natural disaster, New York State stands ready to assist in aid efforts and will coordinate with federal officials as well as the City of New York to provide immediate assistance."

"The Haitian community is an important part of the fabric of New York State and New York City. Our prayers are with the people of Haiti as well as all New Yorkers with ties to the Haitian community."

Press release, January 13, 2010 from <http://www.state.ny.us/governor>



Supporters of Governor Paterson. Photo from <http://www.governorpaterson2010.com/>



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