



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Iwen Chu

Senator Iwen Chu Votes to Pass Legislation Protecting the Rights of Domestic and Sexual Violence Survivors

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| ISSUE: **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

In her continued advocacy for victims of violence, Senator Chu shepherds through stronger laws to protect those at risk

(**Albany, NY**) Earlier this week, Senator Iwen Chu voted for a package of domestic violence legislation to expand the rights of victims of domestic and sexual violence and strengthen protections for survivors. This legislation builds on Senator Chu's, along with the Democratic Majority's, recent victories in helping secure \$35.7 million in the FY 2024-2025 to combat and prosecute domestic violence crimes, and enacting New York's "Rape is Rape" Act at the beginning of this year to significantly expand the types of assaults that would be legally classified as rape.

As a representative of the only majority-AAPI district in the New York Senate, a mother, and a woman in leadership, Senator Chu remains a staunch advocate for the rights and protections of domestic violence survivors. These types of crimes are frequently leveraged against marginalized women who are further isolated on the basis of language proficiency, citizenship status, or financial standing. That's why, in addition to key legislative wins, Senator Chu has also fought to secure local funding for organizations like Maimonides Hospital, the Arab American Association of New York (AAANY), Mahalla, Women's

Empowerment Coalition of NYC, the Coalition of Asian-American IPA, and the SBH Community Service Network to further their work in the community when it comes to serving survivors and offering resources to all who are affected. These organizations in particular dedicate their efforts to serving Asian, Muslim, and Jewish communities in Brooklyn, recognizing the unique barriers that survivors in these demographics can sometimes face.

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Senator Iwen Chu said, “Domestic violence is a silent scourge that affects thousands of people and households throughout New York, yet often operates in the shadows. In my district especially, many survivors are unwilling or unable to come forward, unsure of the support or protections that will be afforded to them once they do. That’s why I was proud to vote for these pieces of legislation, as well as deliver local funding to numerous organizations across my district, to bolster the services afforded to survivors so they can rebuild their lives with freedom and independence.”

The legislation being passed by Senator Chu and the Senate Democratic Majority includes:

- **Combatting Coerced Consumer Debt:** This bill, [S2278A](#), sponsored by Senator Cordell Cleare, would protect survivors of domestic violence and others who have been victims of economic abuse by establishing a right of action for claims arising out coerced debt.
- **Removing ‘Voluntary Intoxication’ Exclusion:** This bill, [S4555B](#), sponsored by Senator Nathalia Fernández, would prohibit the use of the intoxication of victims as a defense in sex crimes, and establish that a person who is voluntarily intoxicated can be incapable of consent.
- **Removal of Time Period for Persistent Sexual Abuse Definition:** This bill, [S1951](#), sponsored by Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal removes the ten year lookback time period limit in relation to being defined as a person who has committed persistent sexual abuse.

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- **Requirements for ERPO Reports:** This bill, [S3340](#), sponsored by Senator Shelley B. Mayer requires extreme risk protection orders to be reported to the statewide computerized registry of orders of protection and certain warrants of arrest.
- **Expands Definition of “Welfare” for Reimbursement of a Victim’s Personal Property:** This bill, [S303](#), sponsored by Senator Julia Salazar would expand the definition of "welfare" in order to enable victims of crime to receive reimbursement for personal property that has been lost, damaged, or stolen as a result of a crime. The reimbursement or replacement of such property is meant to assist the victim in regaining stability and maintaining a reasonable standard of living.
- **Victims’ Rights Disclosures:** This bill, [S5502](#), sponsored by Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton would provide additional rights to crime victims and require the court or district attorney, either at sentencing or at the earliest time possible, to provide the victims of said crime with an informational sheet explaining their rights.
- **Notifying Victims about Final Verdict:** This bill, [S1815](#), sponsored by Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, requires victims to be notified about the final disposition of their case within sixty days following a conviction, and notifies them about their right to make a victim impact statement, which they have the option to personally read at parole hearings.
- **Forfeiture of Convicted Beneficiaries Rights:** This bill, [S5131](#), sponsored by Senator Lea Webb would prevent named beneficiaries, who commit an act of domestic violence against a state or city retiree, from receiving any pension benefits
- **Lethality Assessment of Domestic Violence:** This bill, [S8977](#), sponsored by Senator Webb would require law enforcement officers to conduct a lethality assessment as part of the standardized domestic incident report form when responding to incidents of domestic violence.

Marwa Janini, Executive Director of AAANY, said: “At the Arab American Association of New York, we stand alongside and empower survivors of domestic violence. Senator Chu's support of our work has enabled us to help hundreds of survivors build independence, safety, and stability for themselves and their families. This legislation represents a pivotal effort to combat domestic violence on a systemic level by closing legal loopholes and ensuring justice for survivors. With provisions preventing the use of voluntary intoxication as a defense and expanding support for victims, this package is a significant step forward. Our Brooklyn community thrives when every individual feels safe and supported. Thanks to Senator Chu's commitment to South Brooklyn, we're working to build a stronger, more resilient community where everyone's safety and well-being are protected.”

Nathan Krasnovsky, Chief Executive Officer of the SBH Community Service Network, Inc., said: "On behalf of SBH Community Service Network, we extend our deepest gratitude to Senator Chu for her unwavering support and advocacy in securing funding for our vital programs, including counseling, crisis management services, parent training, and vocational training for domestic violence survivors. Her dedication to addressing the needs of domestic violence survivors is truly commendable and makes a profound impact on our Brooklyn MENA community. Senator Chu's commitment to passing legislation to strengthen the rights of victims of domestic violence, and to bolster protections for survivors, is both admirable and crucial. These legislative efforts including expanding victim's rights disclosures, closing legal loopholes, and requiring extreme risk protection orders to be added to the statewide computerized registry of protection orders, not only demonstrate an understanding of the urgent need for systemic change but also highlight her compassion for those who have endured unimaginable hardships. The funding secured by Senator Chu, alongside the legislative measures she's championed, will undoubtedly make a significant difference in the lives of survivors in our community. By ensuring that true justice and accountability are afforded to each affected individual, she is paving the way for a safer and more equitable

future for all members of our community.”

Somia El-Rowmeim, Founder of the Women's Empowerment Coalition of NYC, said: "With the great support from Senator Iwen Chu, the Women's Empowerment Coalition of NYC is better equipped than ever to support survivors of domestic violence in our Brooklyn community. This crucial support not only bolsters our resources but also amplifies our message of hope and resilience. Together, we are committed to creating a safe and supportive environment where every survivor can thrive."