



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Rob Rolison

# **Life-Saving Legislation to Protect Victims of Domestic Violence Gains Momentum as End of Legislative Session Approaches**

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Members of the State Legislature urge swift passage in the Assembly of legislation that would save lives by providing law enforcement with a tool designed to help them identify victims who are most at risk for intimate partner homicide.

On June 4, 2025, Senator Rob Rolison joined colleagues in New York State legislature, including Senator Lea Webb and Assemblymember Sarah Clark for a press conference in support of their life-saving legislation (S2280A/A4899A), co-sponsored by Senator Rolison, to bring the Lethality Assessment across New York State.

This law 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.

Webb, Clark, Rolison, and colleagues were joined by Joseph Petito, father of Gabby Petito, who was murdered by her partner in 2021. Petito and his family run the Gabby Petito Foundation to assist victims of domestic violence and to ensure every missing person case receives the attention it deserves. In his remarks, Petito noted the potential of this legislation to save women like his daughter, Gabby, noting that victims of domestic violence are often unaware of the imminent danger they face and frequently struggle to access available resources for safety planning to escape the violence.

Several communities across New York have adopted the use of lethality assessments, including Broome, Dutchess and Westchester Counties. A recent study indicated that the use of lethality assessments reduces female homicide by men by almost 40%. Through the lethality assessment and resource sharing, law enforcement empowers victims with information, potentially saving their lives.

This bipartisan legislation passed unanimously through the Senate unanimously on May 13, 2025 and now awaits passage by the Assembly.

“The Lethality Assessment has been a vital part of our response to domestic violence, equipping survivors with the critical information they need to make informed choices about their safety. Dutchess County is one of just three counties in New York currently using this proven, life-saving tool — and it’s time we change that. It should be implemented statewide to strengthen how we support and protect survivors in every community,” said Senator Rob Rolison.

“Both of these bills are about saving lives and addressing long-standing disparities in how we protect vulnerable communities,” said Senator Lea Webb. “Whether it’s ensuring a domestic violence survivor understands the real and immediate risk they face, or making sure the disappearance of a Black girl is treated with the same urgency as any other missing persons case, we must act. These are tools our law enforcement officers and families need right now.”

“I am proud to stand with Joseph Petito, father of Gabby Petito, Senator Lea Webb and my legislative colleagues to advocate for the full passage and enactment of this critical measure to provide victims of domestic violence with greater protections,” said Senator Anthony Palumbo. “Lethality assessments are an important tool, and potentially life saving layer of support for victims of domestic violence, helping to safeguard them from further harm and connecting them with vital resources. This

legislation is important to the Petito family, whose Foundation assists victims of domestic violence and the countless New Yorkers living in domestic violence situations. As the final days of session approach, it is imperative that we get this bill passed and signed into law.”

Said Joseph Petito, Father of Gabby Petito, “Our family stands firmly in support of NY Bill S2280A/A4899A. This represents a critical step towards helping victims of domestic violence by prioritizing prevention and giving our law enforcement the tools to access and respond to domestic violence more effectively. It's a big jump to a future where every individual can feel safe in their own home.”