



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Craig M. Johnson

Senator Johnson's Anti-Domestic Violence Workplace Discrimination Bill Signed into Law

Craig M. Johnson

July 18, 2009

Important legislation sponsored by Senator Craig M. Johnson, (D-Nassau), that would protect victims of domestic violence and stalking from workplace discrimination was recently signed into law by the governor.

The bill (S.958B) will prohibit employers from terminating the employment, or refusing to hire an individual based on their status as a domestic violence or stalking victim. It is the first bill of its kind in New York State.

“For many victims of domestic violence and stalking, their employment situation is their only stable environment,” Senator Johnson said. “That is why we must do everything we can to help these victims hold onto this stability and independence as they work to rebuild their lives.”

Abusers frequently try to control their partners by interfering with their ability to work, including preventing them from going to work, causing disruptions at their workplace and limiting their access to money or transportation. This bill ensures that these types of actions will not influence the employment status of the victim at work.

“Financial security is one of the most important factors in whether a victim of domestic violence will be able to separate from an abusive partner,” said Westchester Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, who sponsored the bill in the Assembly. “We are proud that this legislation will help victims maintain their jobs without fear of unfair termination.”

Additionally, addressing incidents of domestic violence requires time and energy, and often, victims must leave work to handle the legal implications of abuse, attend court, and/or speak with law enforcement officials. The bill will protect the victims’ right to leave work to pursue their legal cases.

The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, NOW and the Association of the Bar of NYC supported Senator Johnson's bill and are celebrating its passage into law.

“Adding victims as a protected class to human rights law takes a meaningful step toward eliminating one of the primary reasons survivors lose their employment,” said Patti Jo Newell, CEO of the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence. “This law will help support survivors in their efforts to gain independence from abusers.”

“The National Organization for Women-New York State thanks NYS Assemblywoman Amy Paulin and Senator Craig Johnson for their leadership in passing crucial legislation for victims of domestic violence,” said the group in a statement.