



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

"Laura Cummings' Law" introduced in State Legislature

GEORGE D. MAZIARZ February 16, 2011

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State Senator George Maziarz (R-C, Newfane) introduced legislation (S.3306) today to improve the operations of the Child and Adult Protective Services systems in order to prevent tragedies like the murder of 23-year old North Collins resident Laura Cummings. The measure is dubbed "Laura Cummings' Law" in her memory.

Laura Cummings, a mentally and physically challenged young adult, was smothered to death by her mother on January 21, 2010 after a lifetime of physical, mental, and sexual abuse by some members of her family. Her death occurred despite numerous complaints to Erie County Department of Social Services officials about the torture she was enduring.

"The system failed Laura Cummings," Senator Maziarz said. "Somehow, someone should have been able to step inside this home and put a stop to the constant terror Laura faced. This new law would offer greater protections for some of the most vulnerable members of our society. If these provisions were in place a little more than a year ago, Laura would be alive today."

There are three major components to the legislation:

- After the second report of abuse of a child or an impaired adult, Child or Adult Protective Services will be empowered and required to seek a court order to enter the premises and investigate the inside of a home when access has been denied by the homeowner.
- Child Protective Services will be allowed to share information about prior abuse reports with Adult Protective Services once a complaint of abuse of an impaired adult has been made.
- It shall be a Class A misdemeanor to deny or attempt to deny any investigation of Child or Adult Protective Services when they are trying to access to an alleged victim for an interview.

"It baffles mind to think about how terribly a parent can abuse a child," Senator Maziarz added. "But regardless of how unimaginable a horrific scene like this appears to most of us, we must be vigilant that there is no shortcoming in the law or in our ability to take action to get someone in need out of a dangerous and life-threatening situation."

Senator Maziarz' legislation was referred to the Senate Children and Families Committee upon introduction this morning. It is co-sponsored by a bipartisan group of a dozen senators, including every member of the Western New York Senate Delegation.

Companion legislation is being introduced today in the Assembly by Assemblyman William Scarborough (D-Queens).

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