



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins' Bill Protects Children From Abuse

JACK M. MARTINS April 11, 2011

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The New York State Senate today passed a measure requiring camp directors to report suspected child abuse regardless of the location where abuse may have occurred. With many parents now beginning to think about summer camps, the bill (S.3777A), sponsored by Senator Jack Martins (R-C-I, Mineola) would protect children and facilitate the detection of abuse by camp staff.

"It only makes sense that when it comes to our children's safety that we take the guess work out of required reports of suspected child abuse cases," Senator Martins said. "We already require so many different professionals to report and it is clear that camp counselors in their position of supervision of our children should be added to that list of mandate reporters."

"Camp directors are experts in youth development and can serve a vital role in identifying suspected abuse so that a child can be helped as quickly as possible," Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos said. "Designating directors as mandated reporters will add another valuable tool to our state's efforts to protect children from abuse and maltreatment, and I strongly encourage the Assembly to act on this common-sense measure."

Camp operators are currently required by the state Department of Health to report abuse or maltreatment that may occur at camp. However, the directors are not included as mandated

reporters of child abuse that may be witnessed in other settings. In addition, directors that report suspected abuse could be liable for civil liability actions, such as slander or defamation. By including overnight, summer day and traveling summer day camp directors among the teachers, medical and law enforcement professions, and many others who act as mandated reporters, New York is increasing the potential for early detection of abuse and facilitating the ability of directors to come forward with important information.

In addition to Senator Martins's bill, the Senate also acted on legislation (S.597A) sponsored by Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R, Merrick) which would preclude convicted sexual offenders from becoming licensed as real estate appraisers. The measure builds upon a 2008 law sponsored by Senator Fuschillo which prevents sex offenders from becoming licensed real estate brokers or salesmen. It would remove a persistent threat by prohibiting convicted sex offenders from becoming state certified as a real estate appraiser and require the reporting of a conviction for a sex offense or sexually violent offense by real estate licensees.

Both bills have been sent to the Assembly.