



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo: Senate Passes Bill Requiring Camp Directors to Report Suspected Child Abuse

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR May 17, 2011

| ISSUE: **ETHICS, CHILDREN, YOUTH**

Queens, NY, May 16, 2011 – NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. (D-Queens), voted for the recent passage of a Senate bill pending in the Legislature, A.05519/S.3777-A, which would amend the social services law to require directors of children's overnight, summer day and traveling summer day camps to report suspected child abuse and maltreatment, regardless of the location where abuse may have occurred.

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 teaching, 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.

Senator Addabbo explains, "As youth development professionals, camp directors work with hundreds of children each year. Their first interest is in the safety and well-being of their campers. The current Department of Health regulation requires camp operators and directors to report allegations of child abuse only when the alleged abuse or maltreatment occurs at the camp. This new bill extends to outside the camp, granting them immunity from civil liability actions like slander and defamation when they assert a good-faith claim of abuse. It also enlarges the network from the current list of 38 persons and officials required to make such a report immediately to the State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment and the local department of social services when there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse. Such protections encourage camp directors to speak out when a child is threatened, guaranteeing that these professionals won't hesitate when the need arises to protect their campers."

The legislation has been sent to the Assembly. If passed, the law will take effect immediately.

###