



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## SENATE ACTS TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FROM ABUSE - Bills Propose Stronger Orders of Protection & Penalties For Sexual Assault of Children

ANDREW J LANZA May 20, 2011

The New York State Senate recently passed a legislative package that would strengthen penalties and provide additional protections for children and families who are victims of domestic or sexual abuse. The proposals build upon the Senate's commitment to supporting victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, preventing abuse from continuing, and ensuring appropriate penalties for criminals who prey upon the state's most vulnerable populations.

"The abhorrent crimes of domestic violence and sexual assault have far-reaching effects for individual families as well as entire communities," Senator Lanza said. "The Senate has taken a stand to tell criminals that this hateful behavior will never be tolerated and that we will support the victims and families to ensure continued protections are in place."

The legislative package acted upon today includes:

- Bill S.1541 - creates new criminal charges and increases penalties for when a person in a position of trust commits sexual assault of a child. This bill is significant because it ensures that abusers who violate the trust and responsibility of caring for a child's well-being be held accountable. The bill has been sent to the Assembly.
- Bill S.1428 - changes the terms of when final orders of protection can begin to ensure coverage for longer periods of time after sentencing. It also expands definitions in the law relating to familial and intimate relationships to ensure protection to more domestic violence victims. The bill will be delivered to the Governor.
- Bill S.754 - enables more domestic violence victims to provide testimony using live, two-way closed circuit televisions in order to prevent additional emotional or mental harm. Televised testimony is currently allowed for children aged 14 and younger, and this bill would offer additional victims the option. The bill has been sent to the Assembly.

- Bill 1414A - expands the factors that courts must consider when determining recognizance or bail for those accused of domestic violence. This would prevent accused abusers from potentially causing injury or harm to victims while on release prior to trial. The bill has been sent to the Assembly.
- Bill S.4222 - amends the Social Services Law to make it consistent with definitions in the Family Court Act and Criminal Procedure Law. This would ensure that victims of domestic violence are not arbitrarily excluded from services based on incomplete definitions relating to family or household members and victims of domestic violence. The bill will be delivered to the Governor.
- Bill S.4244 - seeks to limit the illegal use of guns by ensuring that information about misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence is provided to the national firearm database that performs background checks. This will help determine whether a person should be disqualified from purchasing a firearm based upon conviction for certain misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence. The bill has been sent to the Assembly.

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