



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James L. Seward

Seward Co-Sponsors "College Coaches & Professionals Reporting Act"

JAMES L. SEWARD November 29, 2011

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ONEONTA, 11/29/11 – State Senator James L. Seward (R/C/I – Oneonta) today announced he is co-sponsoring legislation that will close a loophole in the state’s child abuse reporting requirements. The “**College Coaches and Professionals Reporting Act**” adds college coaches, athletic directors, professors, graduate assistants, administrators and college presidents to the list of mandatory reporters of child abuse in New York.

“Crimes against children are among the most serious offenses and we need to take firm action to stop those who commit such heinous acts,” said Senator Seward. “By closing loopholes in New York State law and adding trusted college personnel to the list of mandatory reporters of child abuse we are adding another layer of protection against those who seek to do our young people harm as well as those who cover up such repulsive crimes.”

The bill comes in the wake of an alleged cover-up at Penn State University where a former assistant football coach is accused of molesting eight boys over a fifteen-year period. Several high ranking college officials have been fired in the wake of the scandal and former FBI Director Louis Freeh has been hired by the school to oversee an internal investigation.

“College coaches are among the most giving, community-minded individuals. They conduct developmental camps for young people teaching skills that translate both on and off the playing field. Parents put their trust in coaches and if they break that trust it’s important that guidelines are in place to report, investigate and stop the abuse,” Seward added.

College professionals are currently not defined as mandatory reporters under New York State law. Failure to report abuse results in a Class A misdemeanor conviction with up to a year in jail.

“This bill sends a clear message to college coaches and other school officials – if you witness or learn of child abuse, report it to law enforcement immediately,” Seward concluded.