



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

Squadron Joins Advocates to Push for Stronger Domestic Violence Law

DANIEL L. SQUADRON March 21, 2012

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Urges Senate Action on His Domestic Violence Bill That Has Won Assembly Support

Legislation Dedicated to NYPD Officer Killed by Serial Abuser Would Give DAs New Tool to Better Protect Domestic Violence Victims

ALBANY – Today, State Senator Daniel Squadron joined advocates and leaders to push for his legislation that would increase penalties for repeat domestic violence offenders, as the NYS Coalition Against Domestic Violence's Legislative Awareness Day brought hundreds of advocates to the Capitol. Last week, the Senate Republican Majority shelved the legislation, which passed the Assembly in 2011, by referring it to the Rules Committee and effectively preventing future debate or a vote.

The legislation - S.1510/A.1986 (Golden-Squadron/Rosenthal) - would provide district attorneys with the tools to crack down on recurring violence and abuse by establishing the felony-level crime of “aggravated domestic violence” for abusers who commit two or more offenses within five years. It is dedicated to **fallen NYPD Officer Alain Schaberger**, who was killed last March in Boerum Hill, Brooklyn responding to a domestic violence call. Officer Schaberger was thrown over a staircase railing by a serial domestic violence abuser who had a 12-year history of offenses.

Under current law, only those who cause serious physical injury or kill their victims face felony-level charges. Even those who repeatedly commit domestic violence offenses can only be charged with a low-level misdemeanor -- allowing them to cycle through the system and putting them back out on the streets again and again.

"Today, domestic violence abuses are able to rack up offenses without any promise of protection for their victims," said **Senator Squadron**. "It's time to pass this legislation and give law enforcement the tools they need to protect victims and families. Let's get this done now -- in the name of Officer Schaberger and the countless others impacted by domestic violence and its terrible ripple effects."

"Today, the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence brought together over 200 advocates and allies from across the state to meet with one another and their local representatives at our Legislative Awareness Day," said **Michele McKeon, Chief Executive Officer of NYSCADV**, "I am humbled and heartened by the presence of Senator Daniel Squadron at our LAD. Senator Squadron has been a stalwart and passionate partner on this issue and I am very proud to work with him on his efforts to improve safety, resources and services for individuals affected by domestic violence and their children. This legislation will be an additional opportunity to hold offenders accountable, particularly those who choose to commit their crimes repeatedly against the same party. The crime of Aggravated Domestic Violence used in conjunction with other tools available to the criminal justice system will work to, hopefully, increase safety for victims and their children."

"Safety in our streets is no victory if we cannot keep New Yorkers safe in their homes," said **Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance**. "Too often, victims of domestic violence suffer at the hands of their abusers over and over again, and we have seen how quickly these cases can turn deadly. Domestic violence is a criminal justice and public health crisis that must be aggressively addressed now. For that reason, we are proposing this common-sense law to

deal with domestic violence offenders so that victims know that there are ways to end the cycle of abuse and control. I thank my partners in law enforcement, government officials, and advocates for their support and hard work on this issue, and I urge lawmakers to pass this important bill.”

“Domestic violence is not a one-time occurrence. Nearly 40% of battered women will be victimized again within 6 months,” said **Laurel W. Eisner, the Executive Director of Sanctuary for Families**. “Under current law, an abuser can be arrested and prosecuted for dozens of misdemeanor domestic violence offenses, confident that he will serve little or no time in jail. The consequences are severe. If the proposed law were in place, police officer Alain Schaberger might be alive today. We are grateful to Senators Golden and Squadron for sponsoring this critical piece of legislation.”

“Safe Horizon strongly supports the ‘Aggravated Domestic Violence Act’ which will increase penalties for recurrent domestic violence offenders and help keep New Yorkers safe from repeated abuse,” said **Ariel Zwang, CEO of Safe Horizon**, the nation's leading victim assistance organization. “At Safe Horizon, we share the legislature’s belief that domestic violence can be devastating for New Yorkers, impacting individuals and families long after leaving violent relationships. As the largest nonprofit provider of domestic violence services in the country, Safe Horizon collaborates with the criminal justice system and offers innovative programs that provide affected individuals and families with support. At this time, we ask that the existing laws be adjusted to account for predicate domestic violence offenders. In New York County alone, 679 individuals were convicted of two or more domestic violence offenses between 2005 and 2010. The bill proposed by Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal and Senators Marty Golden, Dan Squadron, Andrew Lanza, and Liz Krueger is an important step in this process, and we are grateful to these legislators for their efforts. We also thank Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance, Jr. for championing this proposal and for his

unwavering commitment to ending domestic violence for all New Yorkers.”

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