



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

## Senator Carlucci and Assemblywoman Gunther Join Fight to Protect People with Developmental Disabilities

DAVID CARLUCCI April 25, 2012

| ISSUE: **MENTAL HEALTH**



### *Sponsor Paula's Law in Assembly and Senate*

**ALBANY, NY** – Assemblywoman Aileen M. Gunther (D, C – Forestburgh) and Senator David Carlucci (D – Rockland/Orange) today announced their sponsorship of legislation (S4817/A7128) requiring the installation and operation of surveillance cameras at all entrances and exits of facilities operated by the New York State Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), including group homes, residential homes and inpatient facilities. It

would also require the commissioner of OPWDD, in consultation with the State Police, to develop a system for maintaining such recorded images.

The legislation was introduced after the tragic rape of Paula Liblick, a 62 year-old severely developmentally disabled woman, in December 2009. Ms. Liblick had been a resident of the same group home with the same caregivers for many years. Unfortunately, someone was able to gain access to the home. Still, no one knows who came in to the facility and assaulted Ms. Liblick.

“Individuals living in or participating in programs at these facilities deserve to be safe,” said Assemblywoman Gunther. “They and their families should feel secure that their surroundings are being monitored. There are cameras in the parking lots of malls and grocery stores, so we know that if something happens, law enforcement may be able to find those responsible by reviewing the security tapes. Why wouldn’t we provide the same level of security for people with developmental disabilities in state-operated facilities?”

“Patients that reside in these state-run facilities should not have to fret over whether or not their safety is at risk,” said Senator Carlucci. “By ensuring that we have a stronger security surveillance apparatus in place, we can protect further people with developmental disabilities while they receive the care they need.”

This proposal comes on the heels of recent news reports that highlight problems and incidents in the state run homes, facilities and programs.

Bill Liblick, Paula’s brother who has actively been advocating and lobbying for passage of Paula’s Law said, “It is outrageous the State of New York has monies to place surveillance cameras everywhere except when it comes to protecting our most innocent and loving members of society.”

“If cameras had been present outside the facility, the State Police may have been able to identify possible suspects,” Gunther said. “Think of how many crimes occur and we are asked to identify the perpetrators from the surveillance tapes being shown on the 6 o’clock news. This is a valuable tool for law enforcement and a powerful deterrent for criminals.”

Ms. Liblick died in April 2011 from complications from the rape. Her attacker was never identified. The group home and day program attended by Ms. Liblick subsequently installed security cameras.

“Unfortunately, the cameras were installed too late for Paula, but it’s not too late to make sure this doesn’t happen again,” said Carlucci.

Liblick added, “What a great legacy Paula Liblick would be leaving knowing that she helped others live a safe and secure life.”

# # #