



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Charles J. Fuschillo Jr.

## Fuschillo Legislation to Raise Penalties for Impersonating an Attorney Approved by State Senate

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR. May 1, 2012

| ISSUE: **CONSUMER PROTECTION**

### *Proposed Law Would Create Felony Charges for Imposter Lawyers*

New York State Senator Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. (R-Merrick) announced today that the New York State Senate passed legislation he sponsors to increase penalties for people who impersonate attorneys in New York State.

“Phony lawyers deserve real punishment for defrauding innocent consumers. People hire lawyers to carry out some of their most important personal and financial wishes, such as wills, home purchases, and marital separations. All of these important matters can be jeopardized if they are not carried out by a licensed attorney. This legislation would ensure that scam artists who pretend to be licensed attorneys face higher penalties,” said Senator Fuschillo.

“Attorneys are entrusted with our most sensitive information, our financial wellbeing, and our reputations. When an individual scams innocent people by impersonating an attorney, they must be held accountable for the harm they caused. I applaud the passage of this legislation in the Senate, and I strongly urge the Assembly to do the same,” said Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice.

The legislation (S1998A) would raise the penalty for practicing law without a license to a class E felony if the violation causes \$1,000 or more in damages. Under current state law, the crime of illegally practicing law is only a misdemeanor, regardless of the damages caused.

Senator Fuschillo urged the Assembly to join the Senate in passing the legislation.