



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Stephen M. Saland

Saland Secures Domestic Violence Funds for Dutchess

STEPHEN M. SALAND July 11, 2012

| ISSUE: **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

County Executive, Legislature Chairman “grateful” for the Senator’s Commitment to Help Victims, Prosecute Offenders

Senator Stephen Saland (R,I - 41st District), working closely with Dutchess County Executive Marcus Molinaro and Legislature Chairman Robert Rolison, was able to secure state funding in the 2012-13 budget that will be used to further address the epidemic of domestic violence.

This announcement comes just weeks after Saland shepherded the passage of the comprehensive domestic violence measure, which he also sponsored (S.7638). Building upon his legislative success, Saland now says two grants are on their way to Dutchess County that will enhance the delivery of services for those individuals victimized by acts of domestic violence.

“Domestic violence knows no jurisdictional boundaries. With seven deaths in two years involving domestic violence related crimes in Dutchess County, including the loss of one of our local police officers responding to a domestic situation, I understand all too well the profound impact domestic violence has on each community. These dollars will help the county comprehensively assist those who need to escape from a potentially deadly situation,” said Saland.

Despite the county's ongoing integrated efforts to combat incidents of abuse, the erosion of federal funds over the last several years along with the prolonged national recession, funding for critical domestic violence programs has become scarce. As the number of domestic violence incidents increase, the county's resources are severely strained at a time when they are needed the most.

Saland successfully secured in the state's 2012-13 budget \$150,000 to offset costs associated with the domestic violence case overload in Family Court. The County's case overload ranks as one of the highest in the state and to meet the needs of domestic violence cases, they must contract with a nonprofit service provider to assist victims without financial means.

"Dutchess County is grateful for Senator Saland's ongoing commitment to making sure the victims of domestic violence have access to essential services. Legal services, in particular, are critical in helping a victim escape a harmful, if not deadly situation, so that they may begin to rebuild their lives away from the perpetrator. The county will partner with not-for-profit agencies to provide legal assistance to indigent domestic violence victims who must confront their attacker in what can be a grueling ordeal in Family Court," said Molinaro.

In addition, Senator Saland sought and secured \$250,000 for training law enforcement, first responders, and magistrates to identify and respond to domestic violence situations. The county is in need of developing and administering a comprehensive county-wide training program to address the serious inconsistencies cited in a 2010 County Legislature report on domestic violence.

"In 2010, the Dutchess County Legislature's Citizens' Advisory Committee on Domestic Violence produced a comprehensive review of our domestic violence system. That report stressed that domestic violence training for law enforcement, first responders, and magistrates is essential as they are often the first people to have contact with any domestic

situation. It is vital that the victim be placed in the care of proper support services and the abuser is removed from the scene without the opportunity to locate the victim later. These funds will go a long way in educating those who make decisions about what support service a victim should use. It will also assist members of the judiciary regarding enhanced laws and bail criteria that were contained in Senator Saland's comprehensive domestic violence law," said Rolison.

Saland, considered one of the state's leaders in the fight against domestic violence, has long advocated for judicial and law enforcement training. Saland's advocacy on this issue dates back to the enactment of the law he authored in 1994, the Family Protection and Domestic Violence Prevention Act, which not only provided the mandatory arrest policy but encouraged training to best address the victims' needs and emotional hardships associated with domestic violence.

Saland concluded, "The recent tragedies in Dutchess County remind us just how close to home domestic violence can strike. To protect our neighbors, and our loved ones, we must invest in programs that will help victims escape the cycle of abuse and create laws that will deter batterers or lock them up for their inexcusable crime against another person or persons as well as the community at large."

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