



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

Senator Nozzolio Announces State Senate Enacts “Brittany’s Law - Domestic Violence Prevention Act”

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO May 12, 2014

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New York State Senator Mike Nozzolio today announced the State Senate has taken a tremendous step forward in adopting a tougher stance against violent crime by enacting “Brittany’s Law - Domestic Violence Prevention Act.” This legislation, S.1850A, sponsored by Senator Nozzolio, will create a publically accessible registry of convicted violent felons.

“Brittany’s Law represents a major step forward for New York in the fight against violent crime and domestic abuse crimes. By putting new measures in place to track violent offenders and keeping our communities informed of their whereabouts, Brittany’s Law will save lives. As Chairman of the Senate Codes Committee and former Chairman of the Crime Victims, Crime and Correction Committee, I am committed to enacting tougher sentencing laws for violent criminals, reinforcing laws to protect women and children from domestic violence, and strengthening the rights of crime victims to prevent future tragedy from occurring,” said Senator Mike Nozzolio.

"The tragic death of Brittany Passalacqua - and the horrific mutilation of Andrew Lesperance of Massena - underscores the need for a registry of violent offenders. We have a responsibility to keep our communities safe. Brittany's Law will bring good out of tragedy, by giving families the information they need to know who is living in their neighborhood. The state's sex offender registry has helped many; we're expecting the same for the violent offender database. I thank Senator Nozzolio for his leadership on this bill,

and urge my Assembly colleagues to join us in passing this important piece of legislation."

The New York State Senate adopted Brittany's Law in 2011, 2012 and 2013, but the New York City-controlled leadership of the State Assembly has repeatedly refused to bring this important legislation to the floor for a vote. Senator Nozzolio has continued his efforts to see the measure enacted into law and has worked with law enforcement officials, crime victims' advocates and Dale Driscoll, grandmother to Brittany Passalacqua, for whom the law is named.

In November of 2009, 12-year-old Brittany Passalacqua was brutally murdered along with her mother, Helen Buchel, at their home in Geneva. The perpetrator was John Edward Brown, a violent convicted felon who had been released from prison early after serving only 2 ½ years for assaulting his infant daughter in 2003. Brown had been put on parole just months before he committed the murders.

Since these tragic murders occurred, Senator Nozzolio has worked closely with Dale Driscoll to develop legislation to allow the public to have greater access to information about violent offenders and the crimes they have committed. Senator Nozzolio worked to establish tougher penalties for violent offenders so they can no longer threaten the lives and safety of innocent people in our communities.

"All we need now for the violent offender registry to become a reality is for the State Assembly to adopt Brittany's Law. New York State currently requires all convicted sex offenders to register with the State and keeps track of those individuals. It makes no sense that we do not do the same for those who commit violent felony crimes against our citizens. We cannot continue to put innocent New Yorkers at risk," concluded Senator Nozzolio.

“Words cannot express the gratitude my family and I share for all the hard work Senator Nozzolio has done, and continues to do to fight for Brittany’s Law,” said Dale Driscoll. “These horrific crimes devastated our family. If this legislation prevents another family from suffering what we have been through, my daughter and granddaughter will not have died in vain. People should have the right to know who they’re bringing into their lives and I will continue to work with Senator Nozzolio to push for this measure in the Assembly.”

Brittany’s Law - Domestic Violence Prevention Act would require all individuals convicted of a violent felony to register with the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) upon release from prison. The registry would be accessible to the public, similar to the registry of sex offenders that the State currently has in place. The legislation also establishes annual registration requirements for offenders to allow local law enforcement agencies and the State to monitor the whereabouts of these individuals.

Senator Nozzolio has been an outspoken advocate for criminal justice reform, crime victims' rights and tougher sentencing guidelines for violent criminals and sexual predators. He has fought to end work release and conjugal visit programs for dangerous felons, and helped enact critical legislation including Megan's Law, the Sex Offender Reform Act, the Domestic Violence Prevention and Family Protection Act and Jenna's Law. Senator Nozzolio is also sponsoring and working to enact “Jackie’s Law”, which would empower law enforcement to pursue charges and prosecute criminals who use a GPS or electronic tracking device to stalk victims.