



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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# **Senator Carlucci & Assemblywoman Jaffee Push for Protections for Service Dog Owners Bill Passes Senate, Push to Pass in Assembly Made**

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PEARL RIVER- Senator Carlucci and Assemblywoman Jaffee stood with service dog owner and Pearl River resident Andrea Myscak to make a final push to pass legislation in the Assembly that will provide protections for service dog owners discriminated against throughout the State.

There are approximately 20,000 service dogs across the country that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks that benefit an individual with a disability. Typically, dogs are handled in a three-unit service team consisting of a person with a disability, a trained service dog and a person over the age of eighteen who has been trained to handle a service dog.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects the rights of people with disabilities to be accompanied by their service animals but, until recently did not protect the rights of the third person in the unit. In 2010 the ADA was revised to include protections for the entire team yet residents in New York are still being discriminated against.

Currently there is no definition of a three-unit service team in New York State Law.

Pearl River resident, Andrea Myscak, brought this issue to her elected officials after several incidents where she was asked to leave a public place and was refused service because of her daughter's service dog.

Virginia, Indiana, Missouri and Maryland recently passed similar legislation that adds protections for three-unit service animals.

Senator Carlucci said, "Service animals provide invaluable support for people with mental health and developmental disabilities. In Andrea's case, her daughter Sara went from being non-verbal with leg braces to verbal and walking with the help of her service animal. We need to make sure New York law defines Andrea's roles in her daughters treatment to avoid incidents of discrimination moving forward. I look forward to working with the Assembly and the Governor to make these protections a reality."

Assemblywoman Jaffee said, "This bill will allow individuals who are training service dogs as part of a three-unit service team to have the same rights and privileges as a person with a disability. The Federal Government recognized that the person with a disability may not be the individual handling the service dog, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was amended to reflect this situation. The State of Virginia also passed a law creating the three-unit service team to ensure that individuals who are handling a service dog on behalf of a person with a disability will not be discriminated against. This bill will follow the Federal Government and Virginia's lead on this important issue."

Andrea Syscak said, "Time and time again I have been told to leave a place of business or have been refused service because of our service animal. Our service dog has changed our lives immensely, greatly improving our quality of life. I want to make sure New York respects the role of three-unit service teams and protects our rights to be in public."