



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Kennedy Announces Senate Passage of Bill Designed to Increase Confidentiality Within Child Fatality Reports

Timothy M. Kennedy

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Kennedy: Legislation Helps Create Greater Report Transparency, While Maintaining Family Privacy

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) announced today the passage of legislation which amends the social services law in order to increase the confidentiality of families named in child fatality reports. If enacted, the law would

require local social services departments to make sure any comments made in the report protect the confidentiality of the deceased child, the child's family and the source of the report. In the past, concerns have been voiced about state officials not releasing fatality reports due to an inability to redact these identities and other sensitive case information.

"By protecting the identities of families, we're allowing them to grieve privately while still gathering the critical information needed for a comprehensive report, said bill co-sponsor Senator Tim Kennedy. "In the process, we're also knocking down any excuse for these reports to not be made public. These documents are designed to offer insight to the circumstances surrounding a child's death, and if we're now mandating confidentiality of family, there should be less hesitation to release these recommendations and findings when requested."

A copy of the bill can be viewed [here](#).

It also mandates that the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) forward the proposed fatality report to the local social services district twenty days before its release, instead of the current thirty, and shortens the time in which the district may provide comments after receiving the report, from 20 days to 10.

Kennedy has been a champion for major reforms to Child Protective Services in Western New York in order to make the system more responsive, accountable, transparent and effective. Just this September, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed into law legislation sponsored by Kennedy that improves the statewide child abuse hotline by requiring New York State to track repeated reports of abuse and neglect.

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Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 63rd District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, the city of Lackawanna and nearly all of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.