



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senator Young's Legislation Passed To Provide Further Protections for Victims of Domestic Violence

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| ISSUE: [CRIME](#), [VICTIMS](#), [DOMESTIC VIOLENCE](#), [WOMEN](#), [COURTS](#)

Legislation will allow domestic violence victims to testify via close-circuit television

ALBANY – According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey, only about 48 percent of all violent victimizations are reported to police. Today, the state Senate passed legislation, authored by Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- Olean), that will provide stronger protections for victims of domestic violence in order to encourage them to report their abuse to the authorities.

“Every nine seconds a woman in the United States is assaulted or beaten and according to studies 84 percent of women visiting hospital emergency rooms for domestic violence were injured by their intimate partners,” said Senator Young. “Allowing a woman who has been victimized to be designated as a 'vulnerable witness,' thus providing for her testimony to be given via closed-circuit television, will encourage these women to come forward and confront their abuser.

“Closed-circuit television has been used effectively to protect other vulnerable witnesses from intimidation and retribution and its use will serve as a tremendous asset to bring domestic violence perpetrators to justice. Fostering a safe environment for victims that allows them to confront their attacker and fight for justice is an important step toward these women becoming domestic violence survivors,” Senator Young said.

Current law only allows children deemed "vulnerable" by a judge to testify via closed-circuit television.

The legislation passed by the Senate today will add domestic violence victims to the list of “vulnerable persons” who are allowed to testify in a criminal proceeding via closed-circuit

television. Senator Young and her colleagues believe the change will decrease the number of attacks that go unreported each year. The change in status would also provide District Attorneys an additional tool to bring a violent offender to justice.

Earlier this year, the Senate and Assembly both passed **legislation** sponsored by Senator Young that would establish a pilot program to allow victims of domestic violence to file for temporary orders of protection through electronic submission.

At the time, Senator Young highlighted the pilot program as another effective means to encourage victims of domestic violence to report their abuse and confront their attacker.

“Allowing a victim to submit a request for a temporary order of protection electronically will encourage them to take advantage of this tremendous security tool without facing the potential for further threats or intimidation from their abuser. Some victims also require immediate temporary orders of protection, but have no means to travel to the appropriate family court. This change will protect victims of domestic violence, and ensure that they are able to secure much needed orders of protections,” she said.

“Some women can feel trapped by their abusers and they may sometimes be unable to attend court proceedings in person without further risking their lives. By allowing these women to file for an order of protection electronically and expanding the use of closed-circuit testimony we are eliminating the potential for additional threats or intimidation and can help victims become survivors,” said Senator Young.