



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Local Family, Officials Call For Action To Honor The Life of a Domestic Violence Survivor

CATHARINE YOUNG May 18, 2015

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*“Domestic Violence Protection Act – Brittany’s Law” will protect others from becoming victims*

ALBANY – If a violent offender registry had been in place, perhaps Shannon Pepper would be alive today. Shannon, the victim of the most brutal domestic violence attack in Cattaraugus County history, tragically died in an accidental fire this past February. Her

abuser, Anthony Nevone, had a prior record which he hid from Shannon.

Linda Randolph, the mother of Shannon Pepper; Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean) and Assemblyman Joseph Giglio (R,I,C-Gowanda) joined the family of murder victims at the Capitol today to call on the state Assembly to act on the “Domestic Violence Protection Act – Brittany’s Law.”

In 2013, Cattaraugus County resident Shannon Pepper was the victim of a brutal assault at the hands of her then-boyfriend, Anthony Nevone. Shannon nearly died in the vicious attack and was left comatose for one month. Nevone was a repeat offender who had previously served prison time for another domestic abuse case.

Shannon eventually recovered from her horrific injuries and worked with Cattaraugus County District Attorney Lori Reiman’s office to build a case against her attacker who was sentenced to two decades in prison and five years of post-release supervision. She then became an outspoken advocate for domestic violence victims and used her personal tragedy to fight for the protection of others by advocating for the “Domestic Violence Protection Act – Brittany’s Law.”

Sadly, Shannon passed away in an accidental fire in her Cuba apartment earlier this year. Her mother, Linda, and stepfather, Thomas attended the press conference in her memory, continuing Shannon’s work to pass Brittany’s Law to save other victims.

Shannon and Linda had collected hundreds of petition signatures, calling on the Assembly to join the Senate in passing Brittany's Law.

"Shannon Pepper was a courageous domestic violence survivor who used her personal tragedy to fight for greater protection for others. Shannon made the passage of Brittany's Law her mission, because she felt victims of domestic violence deserved to know that their abusers would be not only held accountable, but that steps are in place so their attackers could not hurt someone else in the future," said Senator Young.

The Domestic Violence Protection Act – Brittany's Law" ([S.513](#)), cosponsored by Senator Young and fought for by Shannon, would create a publicly accessible registry of convicted violent felons, similar to the New York State Sex Offender Registry.

The measure passed the Senate today, but has stalled in the Assembly in recent years.

"Anthony Nevone and John Edward Brown, the man who viciously murdered Brittany Passalacqua, had already proven their heinous nature when they each attacked these unsuspecting young women. If the registry had been in place, Shannon and Brittany could still be with us today. We know many violent felony offenders are likely to repeat their crimes and establishing a registry and making their information public would help protect

the lives of New Yorkers like Shannon and Brittany,” Senator Young said.

“Today was a heartbreaking day,” said Assemblyman Joseph Giglio. “We spent time hearing from two mothers, and two families, about their tragedies, and they're telling us that we must act to protect others from facing the same situation. We were sent here to keep people safe, to protect victims and to give law enforcement the tools that they need to do their jobs. Brittany's Law is about saving lives and keeping people safe from violent predators. Our communities have the right to be protected, and a registry of the violent felons will offer people an opportunity to know who they are and where they are.”

“I will always miss my daughter, and until my last breath I will be fighting to pass this law. If god-forbid something should happen to a member of the Assembly's child, or grandchild, I will be there to comfort them. Lions have more empathy for their prey than these violent offenders. The criminals know the ropes, and we need this law to protect us,” said Linda Randolph, the mother of Shannon Pepper.

The Randolph family was joined by Dale Driscoll, the grandmother Brittany Passalacqua, a 12-year-old who along with her mother, Helen Buchel, were brutally murdered in 2009 by a convicted violent felon at their home in Geneva, New York. Brittany's law is named to honor their memories. The perpetrator was John Edward Brown, a violent convicted felon who had been released early from prison after serving only 2 ½ years of his sentence for assaulting his infant daughter in 2003. Brown had only been on parole for a few months before committing the murders.

“It is in Shannon’s memory, and the memory of Brittany Passalacqua, that we are gathered today, and it is with the lives of these young women in mind that the Assembly must take action to prevent these tragic circumstances from befalling anyone else, Senator Young said.

Video of today’s press conference, including remarks by Senator Young, Assemblyman Giglio, and Linda Randolph can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4oeI28SJOSc>.