



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Release: Addabbo Supports Bill, Passed by Both Houses, to Increase Public Awareness of Elder Abuse

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR. June 22, 2015

Queens, NY (June 22, 2015) NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., a member of the Senate Committee on Aging, recently voted with his Senate colleagues to approve a bill (S.5328) which authorizes the State Office for the Aging (SOFA) to conduct a public campaign to draw attention to the serious problem of elder abuse in New York State and across the nation.

“A study commissioned by the State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) in 2011 found that an estimated 260,000 older adults in New York State had been the victims of at least one form of elder abuse in the preceding year,” said Addabbo. “It also found that elder abuse – which can be physical, emotional, sexual or financial – is often significantly underreported to law enforcement, adult protective services and other agencies charged with protecting senior citizens from harm. This legislation, by bringing more information about this terrible abuse to the attention of the public, will help to ensure that people are better able to recognize the signs of the problem and to intervene on behalf of vulnerable older New Yorkers.”

Under the bill, the SOFA and the OCFS would collaborate on a public education campaign focusing on zero tolerance for elder abuse. Educational materials would be created to help identify the signs and symptoms of elder abuse, inform people of where and how to report

the crime, and provide details about existing programs designed to provide assistance for victims. Public outreach would include printed materials, as well as audio, video and electronic media and public service announcements.

“I often hold free community events in my Senate district, like the ones co-sponsored by the lawyers Brady and Marshak, to provide legal and other advice for seniors on a wide variety of topics, ranging from probate issues to changes in prescription medication programs,” said Addabbo. “Education and public awareness are key to identifying problems facing our seniors and in taking steps to address their worries and concerns. I am glad the Senate and Assembly, with my support, took action to tackle the devastating issue of elder abuse, which appears to be tragically underreported.” One National Research Council study estimated that only one in every 14 cases of elder abuse comes to the attention of the proper authorities.

The legislation, now that it has been approved by both the Senate and Assembly, will be sent to Governor Cuomo for his final consideration.