



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Protecting Seniors: Stiffer Penalties For Attacks On Elderly New Yorkers

ANDREW J LANZA

### Brutal Muggings of 101-Year-Old Woman, 85-Year-Old Woman Spur Action

Millions of New Yorkers have been shocked by the despicable and cowardly attack on Rose Morat, a 101-year-old Queens woman who was mugged on her way to church. The same attacker is also suspected of beating and mugging 85-year-old Solange Elizee just a half hour later.

If you haven't seen the video footage of this heinous act, [click here](#). Warning: this clip is disturbing, to say the least, but needs to be viewed to drive home the need for this legislation.

I recently announced legislation that will impose tougher penalties for physical assaults on senior citizens. While the assailant behind these vicious crimes could face robbery charges, under current law he would merely face a misdemeanor charge for mugging the two elderly women. Furthermore, the penalties for the physical attack on the 101-year-old woman are the same penalties that would exist if the victim was a 25-year-old football player--and that is an outrage!

Shortly after these attacks, which occurred March 4th, a review by the Senate Task Force on

Critical Choices underscored the immediate need for tougher penalties. Their findings highlighted the shortcomings of the existing law: these types of assaults against the elderly are only Class A misdemeanor offenses, which carry a *potential* penalty of up to one year in prison.

It is a shame that these recent events in Queens had to take place to make us aware of this problem with the law.

My legislation would make it a class D or class E violent felony to assault any senior over the age of 70. The bill will also make it a class D or class E violent felony to assault someone age 60 or older who suffers from a disease or infirmity associated with advanced age. A class D violent felony conviction carries a potential penalty of up to 7 years in prison, while a class E felony conviction carries a potential penalty of up to 4 years in prison. As violent felony offenses, these crimes carry determinate sentences and the perpetrators will not be eligible for parole.

A person capable of committing this type of crime is not simply a mugger – they are a dangerous menace to society who should be kept behind bars for as long as possible. The Senate has championed many efforts to protect the most vulnerable members of our community. This most recent measure is an extension of our dedication to protecting our seniors so they can feel safe in their own neighborhoods.

The bottom line is that anyone who physically attacks a senior citizen should be severely punished, and that's why the additional penalties provided for by this bill are needed. Criminals need to know that if they target and assault a senior citizen, they will go to jail for a long, long time.