



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

WE CAN DO MORE TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN

PATTY RITCHIE August 1, 2011

The Caylee Anthony case sent shockwaves through the nation, as millions of parents wondered, among other things, how a mother could fail to report the death of her child.

It's no secret that every second is precious when a child disappears. The first 48 hours can often mean the difference whether a child is found and whether they live or die.

That's why I am cosponsoring the "Protect Our Children Act" to create tougher penalties for failure to report a missing child.

But it does more than that. It also makes sweeping, comprehensive reforms to address the shortcomings in state law to protect children from cruel abuse and neglect.

The bill, called the "Protect Our Children Act" (S.5862), would give New York State the most comprehensive measures in the nation to address child abuse and neglect.

Among its more than two dozen provisions, the Protect Our Children Act would create the new crime of aggravated murder of a child, with the toughest penalty allowed by law—life imprisonment without parole.

In addition, the bill would expand an existing law of aggravated abuse of a child which makes it a crime when someone recklessly causes physical injury to a child under the age of

14.

Other provisions of the bill would:

Create a new felony offense for obstructing the location of a missing child;

Create a felony offense for especially cruel and sadistic abuse of children. Right now, without clear evidence of physical injury, such abuse can be charged as a misdemeanor, and

Increase penalties for repeat child abusers.

Giving prosecutors the tools they need to punish abusers helps protect children, and ensures justice.

You can read the full text of the Protect Our Children Act by visiting my website, or by following this link: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/61069769/The-NY-Protect-Our-Children-Act>.