



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shirley L. Huntley

6/5/2012: Women's Health Forum

SHIRLEY L. HUNTLEY June 4, 2012

| ISSUE: **HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, MILITARY AFFAIRS, MILITARY, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**



On June 5, 2012, Senator Shirley L. Huntley along with members of the Senate Democratic Conference addressed and discussed a myriad of topics related to Women's Health in a public forum format. Senator Huntley's Military Sexual Trauma bill (S. 6342-C) was discussed by special guest speaker Ardeane Greene-Cook, a retired veteran, survivor of MST, and advocate of female soldiers and veterans.

Ms. Greene-Cook spoke about her experience of being sexually harassed, assaulted, and raped while on active duty. As a result of this trauma Ms. Greene-Cook retired from the Army due to being diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). "PTSD is like a bullet hole you can't see," said Ardeane Greene Cook. "Some doctors have trouble recognizing it in female soldiers and subsequently many of these women do a self diagnosis." The sexual trauma she incurred from these horrific events did not deter Ms. Greene-Cook from advocating and communicating on behalf of female soldiers and veterans who have suffered from MST. "Survivors of MST such as Ms. Greene-Cook continually display the courage and conviction to face their past and seek to help heal others and themselves through advocacy and counseling," said Senator Shirley L. Huntley.

Senator Huntley's bill seeks to have the Commissioner of Mental Health promulgate rules and regulations to disseminate information to female veterans, when necessary, regarding which veterans affairs centers and other organizations such female veterans can seek treatment, counseling and resources for Military Sexual Trauma (MST). This information would be posted on the office's website with a link to the website of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and a link to the State Division of Veterans' Affairs.