



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Elderly Abuse Report, Diplomas for Veterans, State Fair Competition Registration, Earth Day Poster Contest Winner

DAVID J. VALESKY May 22, 2014



This week, I released a report that exposes the high level of elderly abuse and shows financial abuse amongst New York's seniors to be more prevalent than initially thought. The number of incidents involving elder abuse correlate with statistics that show a significant increase in New York's senior population. Unfortunately, these incidents often times go unreported due to the startling fact that the abuser is someone that the victim either trusts, is a caregiver, or more often than not, is a family relative.

As chair of the Senate Aging Committee, I believe it is incumbent upon us to ensure that there are laws on the books to protect seniors and give law enforcement the tools they need to prosecute offenders. In order to combat these rising trends and to protect even more elderly individuals from becoming future victims themselves, I proposed legislation that will, among other things: (1) prevent deceptive financial transactions from taking place, (2) update collection of data methods to track abuse statewide, and (3) amend existing law to stiffen penalties to deter criminal acts from occurring in the first place. More information is available on my [website](#).

Earth Day Poster Contest Winner

Congratulations to Emma Neufang, a sixth-grader at Long Branch Elementary School. She is the winner of the 2014 New York State Senate Earth Day Poster Contest for the 53rd Senate District. I am proud to display her winning poster in my Syracuse office (pictured above).

To celebrate and honor Earth Day, the New York State Senate sponsored an Earth Day Poster Contest for students in grades K-6. This year's theme was "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle." More than 130 students from eight schools in my district participated in the poster contest. All of this year's entries can be seen on my [website](#).

Senate Passes Bill to Award Diplomas to All Veterans

I was pleased to vote in favor of legislation ([S.6292](#)) that would allow any veteran who has served this nation to be awarded a high school degree based on their knowledge and experience gained while in service.

Current law allows honorably discharged veterans of World War II, Korea, and the Vietnam wars to receive their high school diploma if they did not complete their education after their term of service. This legislation would expand eligibility for a diploma to all veterans who

served in the United States military should they wish to receive one.

The bill was sent to the Assembly.

Scholarship Program Launched to Draw Top High School Students to STEM Careers

The New York State Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Incentive Program is intended to encourage the best and brightest high school students to pursue high-demand, high-tech careers and build their future in New York. The program provides a full SUNY or CUNY tuition scholarship to the top 10 percent of students in every New York high school if they major in a STEM field and work in a STEM job in New York State for five years after graduation.

To be eligible for a STEM award, a student must be attending a New York State high school and be ranked in the top 10 percent of his/her graduating class, beginning with the 2014 graduating class, and enroll in full-time study at a SUNY or CUNY college in the fall term following high school graduation. Award details and applications are available at the New York State Higher Education Services (HESC) [website](#). Applications are due August 15, 2014.

New York State Fair Competition Registration Now Open

Any New York State resident can enter a State Fair competition, and registration is now underway. Some winners earn a share of more than \$200,000 in cash prizes; others receive medals or ribbons. In 2013, more than 6,000 people submitted approximately 28,000 entries in 275 categories.

Among the new competitions this year is one called "Bucket of Junk." Teams of competitors must make an identifiable object using only the odds and ends in a provided bucket. Also new this year is a watermelon carving event, in which people try to make the best design they can from the watermelon and various pieces of fruit that they bring from home.

Competition rules, deadlines, and entry forms can be found on the New York State Fair [website](#). Most entry forms can be filled out and submitted online. However, competitors who prefer printed information can have it sent through the mail by calling the State Fair at 487-7711 ext. 1337.