



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Remember Mary Byron! Senate passes legislation to protect victims of domestic violence

TERRENCE MURPHY May 11, 2017



Albany, NY - In late 1993, Mary Byron of Louisville, Kentucky was raped, assaulted, and stalked by her former boyfriend, Donovan Harris. Harris was arrested and jailed, but posted bail and was released. On the evening of December 6th, as Mary sat in her car warming it up after leaving work, Harris fired seven bullets at point blank range, killing her. It was Mary's 21st birthday.

No one had told Mary that Donovan Harris was free.

The murder of Mary Byron led to the creation of the automated victim notification system, which has been adopted by over thirty states, including New York. With the avid support of Senator Terrence Murphy, New York is about to take the next step to protect victims by extending automated notifications to include protective orders.

On May 10, the New York State Senate passed legislation (S4060) that enhances the state's automated victim notification system. The bill will provide security and emotional peace of mind by allowing victims to be notified in real time when their order of protection request has been served.

"There are thousands of victims who are killed or assaulted each year, in many cases almost immediately after an order of protection is served on their abuser," Senator Murphy said. "By passing this legislation, victims will now be notified when they are in the greatest danger. This legislation will also give criminal justice agencies new tools to assist victims during a vulnerable time in their lives."

"One of the most dangerous times for a victim is when an order of protection is served, and timely notice to the victim is essential so that they can plan for their safety," said Senator Andrew Lanza, Chairman of the Senate's Codes Committee. "I'm proud to have authored this legislation which extends New York's automated victim notification system to include protective orders, making both victims and criminal justice agencies better equipped during this vulnerable time."

Notification of protective orders can be by mail, telephone, E-mail, or other means of electronic communication. Furthermore, by passing this legislation New York would be eligible for federal grants that help states expand their victim notification systems.

The bill will be sent to the Assembly.