



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Senate Passes Valesky Legislation to Require Life Saving Equipment on Piers and Docks Throughout State Canal System

DAVID J. VALESKY May 17, 2017

| ISSUE: **COMMUNITY SAFETY, PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

May 17, 2017 – The Senate today passed legislation sponsored by Sen. David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) that would enact “Aaron’s Law,” which would require ring life buoys be installed on every pier, wharf, lock, and dock in the New York State Canal System. Currently, no such lifesaving equipment or flotation devices are available in case of an emergency.

Aaron Teater, 23, drowned at Sylvan Beach on May 2, 2016. He had been fishing with his mother, Nancy, from the pier in the Erie Canal where it connects with Oneida Lake at Sylvan Beach. When his tackle box, filled with heirloom lures given to him by his deceased grandfather, fell into the canal Teater dove in to retrieve the box. Icy cold water and a strong undercurrent pulled Teater away from the pier. Although he tried to swim to a spot on the pier where he could hoist himself up, he struggled against the current. With no rope and no life saving devices available, Nancy watched her son drown in the canal.

“No other family should experience the loss that the Teater family has endured, and this bill’s passage in the Senate today marks one step closer to preventing similar tragedies in the future,” Sen. Valesky said.

“I can’t express how much I appreciate Sen. Valesky’s work on this bill and how pleased my family and I are with the common sense of the Senate in passing this bill,” Starlette Teater, Aaron’s sister, said.

The bill would require the Canal Corporation to install one ring life buoy on each side of a pier, wharf, lock, and dock, as well as one near each external stairway leading to water. Each life ring would have at least 100 feet of line.

The bill is sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblyman Bill Magee (D-Nelson) and has been referred to the Assembly Corporations, Authorities, and Commissions Committee.

[Watch Sen. Valesky speak in support of the bill on the floor of the Senate.](#)

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January 11, 2017

In Assembly Committee

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