



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Pachyderms pack a punch: Bill sponsored by Murphy & Paulin to protect performing elephants signed by Gov

TERRENCE MURPHY October 24, 2017

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Pleasantville, NY - If elephants could talk, they would likely raise their trunks in a salute and say "thank you" to Senator Terrence Murphy, Assemblywoman Amy Paulin and a tenacious group of Pace students who refused to quit until a bill prohibiting their mistreatment was in place. On October 19, Governor Andrew Cuomo signed the historic "Elephant Protection Act" into law.

The Elephant Protection Act safeguards all elephants from the physical and psychological

harm inflicted upon them by living conditions, treatment, and cruel methods that are necessary to train elephants to perform in entertainment acts. The only exemptions to the Act include zoos, aquariums, wildlife sanctuaries and non-profit environmental education programs.

"The law shows New York State is proving to be a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves," said Senator Murphy said, "As a lover of animals, I believe it is our duty to protect them. It is rewarding to see that we have come to our senses as a society and will no longer tolerate the abuse of performing elephants."

"Elephants have been exploited and abused in entertainment acts for too long," said Assemblywoman Paulin. "Confinement, torture and unhealthy living conditions have led to early death for these intelligent, gentle animals. Today, New York has become the leader in ending this horrible practice. Elephants will no longer be subjected to cruel treatment for our amusement."

"It is time society put an end to this barbaric relic of another age," said Michelle Land, clinical professor of environmental law and policy at Pace University. "Wild elephant populations are in dire straits globally. By recognizing its duty to end entertainment acts that perpetuate misinformation and false values about the species, New York State is setting an example that we believe other states will follow. The contention of circuses, trainers and managers that performing elephants are 'educational' is demonstrably false -- one has only to attend a performance to understand. Silly tricks such as headstands, balancing on stools, and parading in foolish costumes undermine a child's appreciation and understanding of wildlife."

The Elephant Protection Act was inspired by the students at Pace University's Dyson College

of Arts & Sciences Environmental Policy Clinic, who recognized the injustice being perpetrated against circus elephants and vowed to act. The student of the Pace Environmental Policy Clinic, who actively lobbied in Albany and collected 1,100 student signatures in support of the bill, wrote to the governor. Working in conjunction with Senator Murphy, Assemblywoman Paulin, and Pace faculty members John Cronin and Michelle Land, the students crafted the Elephant Protection Act.

To protect performing pachyderms, Senator Murphy sponsored the "Elephant Protection Act" (2098B) which prohibits the use of elephants in circuses and other entertainment venues in New York State. Senator Murphy's bill was passed by the Senate on May 23 by a unanimous vote of 62-0. The Assembly version of the bill, A464B, sponsored by Assemblywoman Paulin, was passed on June 6 by a vote of 56-6.