



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

SERINO SUPPORTS STRENGTHENING OF NEW YORK'S SEXUAL HARASSMENT LAWS

SUSAN SERINO March 13, 2018

| ISSUE: **SEXUAL HARASSMENT, WORKPLACE SAFETY**



ALBANY, NY—With the support of Senator Sue Serino, the NYS State Senate took an unprecedented step in combatting sexual harassment in the workplace by passing comprehensive legislation aimed at empowering victims and putting an end to the pervasive culture that has plagued too many in the workplace for generations.

“There was a time in my life when I was a single mother, living pay check to pay check, working to support my son, and I know the fear that far too many in the workplace face when it comes to speaking out

about harassment,” said Senator Sue Serino. “In the wake of the #MeToo movement, the sad fact is too many of us have a story to tell.”

Specifically, the bill (S7848A) includes significant reforms that would:

- protect hardworking taxpayers from paying for public sector harassment settlements;
- establish a consistent statutory definition of sexual harassment;
- prohibit the anonymity of the accused in court-approved settlements and ban mandatory sexual harassment arbitration clauses;
- prohibit confidentiality agreements unless the victim specifically requests confidentiality;
- expand protections to independent contractors; and
- create uniform policies for all branches of state and local government.

With the breaking news of Harvey Weinstein scandal rocking all industries across the country, Senator Serino began engaging local business leaders and employees in conversation about their experiences and challenges. Coupled with the barrage of headlines highlighting the fact that New Yorkers have spent upwards of \$11 million to settle sexual harassment lawsuits over the past decade, Senator Serino immediately began speaking out about the need to empower victims and ensure that taxpayer dollars are not used to silence them, as has been done for years in Albany. She urged her colleagues in the Legislature to fight for a more independent process in which victims could make their voices heard and fought to ensure that those who create a hostile work environment be held financially liable.

“Changing our culture will take time,” Serino continued. “However, in passing this legislation, we take a significant step forward in helping to rewrite that story for many across the state by sending a strong message to those in power that the time to change the culture has come. We are working together to ensure that our workplaces are free from hostility and harassment, victims are empowered and transparency is made a priority.”

The bill will now be sent to the Assembly.

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2017-S7848A

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Enacts into law major components of legislation necessary to combat sexual harassment in the workplace

March 04, 2018

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by Catharine Young

Do you support this bill?