



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

BILL TO EMPOWER WOMEN THROUGH ENDOMETRIOSIS EDUCATION PASSES SENATE

SUSAN SERINO June 14, 2018

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ALBANY, NY— With endometriosis being the leading cause of infertility in women, Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park) and Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal (D/WF—Manhattan), recently introduced legislation aimed at empowering young women through important education about endometriosis and other menstrual disorders that could have impacts on their overall health. The two bill sponsors, who most recently teamed up to successfully repeal the infamous ‘Tampon Tax,’ announced today that the bill has passed unanimously in

the State Senate.

Senator Sue Serino said, “Too often, young women are spending years suffering in silence while unknowingly dealing with the devastating side effects of endometriosis and other menstrual disorders month after month. On average, women suffer with these symptoms for ten years before receiving a diagnosis—that’s ten years of missing school, work, sports and activities due to extreme menstrual pain and other symptoms. Information is power, and this bill will provide young women with critically important information and resources that will empower them to seek help sooner. I thank my colleagues in the Senate for recognizing the importance of this bill and we hope to see it pass in the Assembly before the Legislative Session concludes.

“Endometriosis and other menstrual disorders sentence millions of sufferers to a lifetime of pain. The pain is worsened by the silence and shame that accompanies the diseases, which often make finding a diagnosis and effective treatment elusive. This bill will help school-aged girls better understand their bodies and their periods. When you know what’s normal, you also know what’s not normal. I commend the State Senate and Senator Sue Serino for passing this vital piece of legislation, and I look forward to passing the companion bill in the New York State Assembly.” Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (D/WF-Manhattan).

According to the Endometriosis Foundation of America, 7 million American women suffer from endometriosis, an often painful disorder that impacts women’s reproductive organs. For many who live with the condition, the pelvic and lower back pain often associated with it can be debilitating to the point in which they can no longer partake in their normal day-to-day activities. As a result, many young women miss school and work, and dealing with the symptoms can lead to chronic pain, physical and emotional distress, and can be academically, professionally, and financially devastating.

While this is a common menstrual condition, many young women simply are not aware of it, which is why the Endometriosis Foundation of America argues that women typically suffer from the disorder for 10 or more years before being correctly diagnosed. Additionally, endometriosis is the only known precursor to ovarian cancer, a cancer known as the ‘silent killer’ because it often goes undetected until the latter stages and is considered one of the

most deadly cancers in women.

Early intervention is key when it comes to effectively addressing endometriosis. Left untreated, the disorder can also cause infertility and lead to hysterectomies. In fact, researchers have noted that as many as half of women who suffer from infertility are affected by endometriosis.

The bill's sponsors were made aware of the issue after meeting in April with representatives of the Endometriosis Foundation of America who developed the ENPOWR (**EN**dometriosis: **P**romoting **O**utreach and **W**ide **R**ecognition) Project, a community-based endometriosis program that promotes awareness and encourages young women to seek treatment.

*"Endometriosis is a vastly under-documented public health crisis in women's healthcare with 90 percent of the symptoms starting in adolescence. The Senate vote today is a significant step forward in the name of conscientious healthcare policies and is an excellent example to the rest of the country. It's been my dream to one day see endometriosis taught in classrooms across America. Thank you, Senator Sue Serino and Assemblymember Rosenthal, for introducing this bill. It will change the lives of millions of young women. Early diagnosis is key to treating this disease, " said **Tamer Seckin, MD**, Founder of the Endometriosis Foundation of America (EndoFound) #LetsTalkPeriod*

Dr. Piraye Yurttas Beim, Founder, and CEO of next-generation women's health company Celmatix and Board Member of the EndoFound said, "Based on current trends, every five seconds a baby girl who will grow up to develop endometriosis is born. As a patient myself, I know the consequences of learning too late in life that the symptoms of endometriosis are not a normal part of being a woman. There is a pressing need to get more information and resources about this devastating condition into the hands of women earlier in their lives. I applaud Senator Serino and Assemblymember Rosenthal for taking on this important cause, and hope very much that the rest of the country will follow New York State's example."

The bill (S. 8543/A. 10763) aims to model this approach by requiring the Commissioners of Health and Education to develop age-appropriate educational materials for endometriosis, and other menstrual disorders, to be made available to school districts and health care practitioners to raise awareness about these conditions and to ensure that young women have the information they need to effectively advocate for their personal health.

Since the bill's introduction in May, a public awareness campaign, #LetsTalkPeriod, was launched in order to encourage passage of the bill. A change.org petition was started and that has since garnered almost 2,500 signatures. New Yorkers who wish to add their names to the petition, can do so by [clicking here](#).

The bill has also caught the attention of celebrities who have long advocated for endometriosis awareness like **Padma Lakshmi**, host of "Top Chef" and co-founder Endometriosis Foundation of America. In response to the launch of the #LetsTalkPeriod campaign, Lakshmi said,

"All teenage girls and boys should learn about periods and the symptoms of endometriosis since ten percent of females suffer from it. If I had known in high school, I could have saved myself so much pain and isolation. It would have been such a game changer."

For more information and important resources for those dealing with endometriosis and other menstrual disorders, visit endofound.org.

The bill has been sent to the Assembly.

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The Endometriosis Foundation of America (EndoFound) is a 501 (c)3 non-profit organization that strives to increase disease recognition, provide advocacy, facilitate expert surgical training, and fund landmark endometriosis research. Engaged in a robust campaign to inform both the medical community and the public, the Endofound places particular emphasis on the critical importance of early diagnosis and effective intervention while simultaneously providing education to the next generation of medical professionals and their patients.