



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

# **SERINO TO STATE: WARN PARENTS ABOUT DROWNING RISKS**

[Susan Serino](#)

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ISSUE:

- [Drowning Prevention](#)
- [Child safety](#)
- [Water Safety](#)
- [Boating Safety](#)

# DROWNING PREVENTION AWARENESS

HYDE PARK, NY – The idea of a child drowning is every parent’s worst nightmare, but the reality is, drowning is the number one cause of death for children ages one to four. That is why, Senator Sue Serino today introduced legislation to more effectively empower parents and caregivers by providing them with the critically important information they need to keep children safe in and around water.

*“As parents, we always try to do our best to keep two eyes on our kids at all times, but distractions happen. I spent a period of my life as a busy single, working mom, and I ran a small child care center for a number of years. Like all parents, I know that it only takes a second for kids to get into trouble when we’re not looking, and the best thing we can be is prepared,” **said Senator Serino.** “Parenting does not come with a handbook, but there are plenty of opportunities for community partners like pediatricians, day care providers and others to provide parents with critically important information to help keep our kids safe, and that is what this bill is all about.”*

With summer in full swing, tragic cases of childhood drowning have dominated the headlines, and the message is clear: we can, and we must do better to ensure that parents have the tools they need to more effectively prevent these devastating accidents.

Specifically, Senator Serino’s bill (S. 9143) would require the State’s Department of Health to create a comprehensive public awareness and education campaign to

educate New Yorkers on the dangers of child drowning and how to best prevent it. The bill expressly requires the department to make educational materials available for pediatricians, childcare providers, elementary and secondary schools, hospitals, birthing centers and additional organizations that may work with children in and around water.

Awareness is the key to prevention and the goal of this legislation is to ensure that parents of young children know the statistics surrounding drowning, know what to do to prevent it, and know how to respond should an accident occur.

### **By the Numbers:**

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drowning is the leading cause of death in children ages 1-4 and the second leading cause of death in children ages 1-14;
- While many people assume that vigilance is only required around pools or when the child is bathing, but many sources argue that 69% of children who drown were not supposed to be swimming or near water;
- It is widely reported that a child can drown in less than 30 seconds and in only half an inch of water;
- According to the CDC, more than 50% of drowning victims treated in emergency departments (EDs) require additional care, a staggering number compared with a 6% hospitalization rate for all unintentional injuries;
- Nonfatal injuries caused by drowning can include severe brain damage, memory problems, learning disabilities, and permanent loss of basic functioning.

**Senator Serino concluded,** *“Childhood drowning is a serious and scary public health issue, but with the right tools, it is preventable. We should be doing all that we can to arm parents with the resources they need to identify risky situations, provide life-saving assistance, and help prevent these types of tragic accidents.”*

Senator Serino is actively seeking an Assembly sponsor for the bill.