



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

SERINO SUPPORTS CHILD VICTIMS ACT, URGES STATE TO DO MORE TO BETTER PROTECT CHILDREN

SUSAN SERINO January 28, 2019

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ALBANY, NY— Today, with the support of Senator Sue Serino, the NYS Senate unanimously approved the Child Victims Act (CVA)—a bill to grant justice to victims of child sex abuse. While Serino voted in the affirmative, she urged the State to do more to hold abusers accountable, get predators off the streets and better protect children from abuse to begin with. Following the vote, Senator Serino released the statement below:

“As I have said since day one, these victims of child sexual abuse deserve justice, and I commend each and every survivor who has bravely shared their stories. Every time one of these courageous individuals speaks out, we are one step closer to getting these monsters off our streets. However, I believe that we can do more when it comes to holding perpetrators criminally responsible for their despicable acts, so it is my hope that passing this bill today is only the first step.

I have met with countless survivors and it has become abundantly clear that there are far, far too many children being victimized and scared into silence. Enough is enough, we need to do more to better protect New York’s children.

That’s why, in recent years, I have introduced legislation to prevent abuse by making every adult who works with children mandated reporters. If you are working with children, you have a duty to speak out if they are in danger, and unfortunately because our laws do not expressly require this reporting, too many children are being left vulnerable. Last year, this bill passed in the Senate unanimously, and today, I urged my colleagues to join me in the fight to make it law so that we can better protect our children from ever being victimized.”

Senator Serino’s bill (S. 1257) was introduced in response to the 2016 conviction of a county legislator who used his position with a local children’s organization to sexually abuse two boys. The horrendous incident and the trial that followed exposed the terrible holes in New York State law that not only leave children vulnerable to abuse, but allow abusers to continue working with and around their victims and other children. Specifically, the bill would expressly provide that any person 18 years of age or older working directly with children—whether the position is paid or volunteer—be required to report any suspected abuse directly to law enforcement.

In addition to urging support for her bill, Senator Serino also supported proposed amendments to the Child Victims Act that would have fully eliminated the criminal statute of limitations and would have created a fund to ensure that all victims would be eligible for financial compensation—two notable pieces missing from the original CVA. Under current law, victims of certain sex abuse crimes only have until the age of 23 to press criminal charges against their abuser. The CVA only gives these victims until the age of 28, but

increases the statute of limitations to the age of 55 for civil cases. Senator Serino has been a vocal advocate of fully eliminating the criminal statute of limitations to ensure that perpetrators are held criminally responsible for their crimes.

While the new leadership in Albany refused to accept and pass the amendments proposed on the floor of the Senate today, Senator Serino will continue to advocate for measures that will bring justice to victims and hold abusers fully responsible for their heinous actions.