



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

NEW YORK STATE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGING



Senator Rachel May
Chair

Chair
Aging
Legislative Commission on Rural
Resources
Committees
Agriculture
Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks
and Recreation
Elections
Environmental Conservation
Higher Education

STATE OF NEW YORK



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December 21, 2020

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Temporary President and Majority Leader
New York State Senate
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator Stewart-Cousins:

I am pleased to transmit the Annual Report of the Senate's Standing Committee on Aging for the 2020 Legislative Session. As Chair, I am proud to continue to lead our efforts to address important matters under my committee's jurisdiction. This year, as we found ourselves in a state of emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Aging Committee grappled with the devastating impacts on nursing home residents and strove to bring new direction and focus on our state's long-term care systems.

The Committee held 2 hearings this past year, both directed at the circumstances in nursing homes during the pandemic. On August 3, I co-chaired the first of two legislative hearings on the impacts of COVID-19 on residential health facilities in New York State. Witnesses included Department of Health (DOH) Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker, as well as representatives of nursing home, assisted living, and home care associations, nursing home staff, families who have lost loved ones in nursing homes to the virus, and advocates for the aging and others in long-term care. I am proud that the hearings resulted in several practical outcomes; the testimony of family members was instrumental in persuading DOH to revise visitation policies, and several bills to improve those policies and nursing home oversight have been drafted.

The loss of life among nursing home residents in New York and nationwide has been one of the greatest tragedies of this pandemic. We held these hearings in order to get answers for the grieving families and to insure that policies are in place moving forward to prevent further tragedy, while also defending the rights and the quality of life of those who depend on long-term care. As Chair of the Senate Committee on Aging, I have been in frequent contact with nursing facilities and the Department of Health since early on in the pandemic. I know they have been stretched to the limit by this crisis and have tried to do the best they can in extreme circumstances. But I have also heard from families, health care workers, and advocates about a lack of communication from facility management and from the DOH, about staffing and equipment shortages, about changing and sometimes conflicting policies that do not always recognize the complexity of long-term care or the best interests of residents and families. It is my hope that through our efforts this year and in coming years, we will be able to ensure that nursing home residents and their caregivers will not struggle as they did during this challenging and uncertain year.

During the 2020 session, the Aging Committee met 3 times in session and reported 10 bills. I thank my colleagues who served on the Committee for their efforts and support of the work that was done in the committee this year, and I thank you for the continued support from the Majority Conference in the committee's operations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rachel May". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end.

Rachel May, 53rd District

2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

**NEW YORK STATE SENATE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGING**

Senator Rachel May, Chairperson

Committee Members

Senator Rachel May Senator Joseph Addabbo Senator Alessandra Biaggi Senator Kevin Thomas	Senator Sue Serino Senator Chris Jacobs
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Committee Staff

Kristin M. Williams, Committee Clerk

COMMITTEE JURISDICTION AND OVERVIEW

The New York State Senate Standing Committee on Aging has legislative oversight responsibilities for issues concerning Elder Law, nursing homes, caregivers, and senior services.

During the 2020 Legislative Session, 69 bills were referred to the Committee for its review. Of these bills, ten (10) were reported from the Committee. Seven (7) were passed by the Senate, and one (1) passed in both houses. This work was conducted through a series of 3 committee meetings. A list of all bills that were reported from the committee is provided at the end of this report.

In addition to its regular meetings, the Committee held 2 hearings and/or roundtable meetings. The topic of these hearings was the state of care of our nursing home residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

The following key bills were acted on by the committee in 2020:

- **S8633B (MAY)** which, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, would study the state of long-term care services in the state through the creation of a task force
- **S7712 (MAY)** which would incorporate identity theft into the definition of elder abuse for purposes of support services and programs for older persons
- **S5557A (STEWART-COUSINS)** which would increase the amount of income that property owners may earn and maintain eligibility for property tax exemptions when they are over 65 years of age and for persons with disabilities who have limited income
- **S4408 (GOUNARDES)** which requires notice by lenders to the department of financial services upon commencing foreclosure related to certain types of reverse mortgages

TWO HOUSE BILLS

In 2020, one (1) of the 69 bills referred to the Standing Committee on Aging passed both houses of the Legislature and the Governor has signed this bill into law. No bills were vetoed.

Bill	Sponsor	Summary	Action
S4408	Gounardes	Requires lenders foreclosing on home equity conversion reverse mortgages to provide notice to the department of financial services and the mortgagors	Chapter 337

SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

All bills reported from the committee on aging in 2020:

Bill	Sponsor	Summary	Significant Action
S2187B	Bailey	Relates to income eligibility under the EPIC program	Passed Senate Only
S2313	Skoufis	Relates to the definition of income in relation to the enhanced STAR exemption	Reported from Committee
S2945B	Stavisky	Makes reclassification of rent controlled dwelling retroactive to time of decrease in income of members of household of dwelling	Passed Senate Only
S4408	Gounardes	Requires lenders foreclosing on home equity conversion reverse mortgages to provide notice to the department of financial services and the mortgagors	Chapter 337 of 2020
S5209A	Sanders	Relates to informal caregiver training	Passed Senate Only
S5557A	Stewart-Cousins	Increases the amount of income property owners may earn for the purpose of eligibility for the property tax exemption for persons over 65 years of age and persons with disabilities and limited income	Passed Senate Only
S5891A	Biaggi	Establishes the elder abuse shelter aftercare demonstration program	Reported from Committee
S7705A	May	Creates the office of older adult workforce development within the office for the aging	Reported form Committee
S7712	May	Incorporates identity theft into the definition of elder abuse for the	Passed Senate Only

		purposes of support services and programs for elderly persons	
S8633B	May	Enacts the “reimagining long-term care task force” to create a task force to study the state of long-term care services in this state	Passed Senate Only



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