



NEW YORK STATE SENATE DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

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Senate Democratic Majority Supports And Protects Victims Of Domestic Violence And Sex Crimes

(Albany, NY) The Senate Democratic Majority will pass legislation today that will assist victims of domestic violence and sex crimes. The bills that will be passed by the Senate Majority include protecting victims of domestic violence from discrimination, safeguarding the new addresses of victims of sexual offenses, stalking, and human trafficking, and expanding the definition of coercion in the second degree to include the production or dissemination of intimate images.

“The Senate Majority has taken historic steps already this Legislative Session to stand up for crime victims, and these bills continue that commitment,” **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said. “The bills advanced today will protect the victims and survivors of domestic violence and other crimes. Many of these bills were held up for years by the previous Majority, and are only moving forward now thanks to the new Senate Democratic Majority. I commend the bill sponsors for their commitment to preventing violence while also supporting the victims of these horrible crimes.”

The legislation to support and protect crime victims being advanced by the Senate Majority includes:

- **Allowing Domestic Violence Victims to Cancel Contracts:** This bill, [S.2356](#), introduced by Senator Kevin Parker, will allow those impacted by domestic violence, who have sought and received a permanent order of protection, and are under a multi-year contract for phone, cable or bundle services to break the contract without penalty.
- **Domestic Violence Advocate-Victim Privilege:** This bill, [S.2224-B](#), introduced by Senator James Sanders Jr., will establish that domestic violence advocates may not disclose any communication made by a client to the advocate except in certain, limited circumstances.
- **Ensuring Victims Receive Services:** This bill, [S.1040](#), sponsored by Senator Roxanne Persaud, will ensure that victims of domestic violence time away from the workplace to obtain services, counseling or to attend court proceedings.
- **Mail Ballots for Victims of Domestic Violence:** This bill, [S.3232A](#), sponsored by Senator Diane Savino, will allow victims of domestic violence to cast a special ballot by mail.
- **Statute of Limitation Reform:** This bill, [S.2416](#), sponsored by Senator Anna Kaplan, will increase the statute of limitation for civil suits related to injury caused by domestic violence to two years. This bill recognizes the sensitive nature of domestic violence and affords victims an extra year to bring a civil suit.
- **Enforcing Orders of Protection:** This bill, [S.1868](#), introduced by Senator Jamaal Bailey, encourages the vigorous enforcement of orders of protection by eliminating the limited liability rules that prevent victims of domestic violence from recovering all of the civil damages owed to them. The bill removes limited liability where a defendant is found liable at trial for the victim's injuries due to failure to obey or enforce an order of protection. This bill does not change the proof required to establish liability, nor does it shift the burden of such proof.

- **Expanding the Definition of Coercion:** This bill, [S.4345](#), introduced by Senator Monica Martinez, expands the definition of the offense of coercion in the second degree to include the production or dissemination of intimate images. This legislation will offer appropriate punishment to offenders and provides greater protection for victims.
- **Tenants’ Rights to Call Police or Emergency Assistance:** This bill, [S.4657-A](#), introduced by Senator Brad Hoylman, establishes the right of tenants to call police or emergency assistance without fear of losing their housing as the result of property owner actions or local nuisance laws. This will help ensure that victims of domestic violence and crime victims can access police or emergency assistance without fear of losing their housing.
- **Authorizing Registration Records of Victims of Sexual Violence:** This bill, [S.257](#), introduced by Senator Tim Kennedy, allows victims of sexual violence protection against their attacker by enabling them to have their voter records sealed. This bill extends protections to victims of sexual violence to whom anonymity is not currently provided.
- **Domestic Partners Eligibility for Crime Victims’ Compensation:** This bill, [S.4958](#), introduced by Senator Kevin Parker, will allow people maintaining significant and long-term, yet not legally formalized, relationships with homicide victims to be eligible for compensation from the Office of Victim Services.
- **Reporting of Domestic Incidents:** This bill, [S.1243-A](#), sponsored by Senator David Carlucci, allows a victim of a domestic incident to make a complaint to any local law enforcement agency in the state regardless of where the act took place.
- **Employment Related Transportation Expenses:** This bill, [S.5443](#), sponsored by Senator Roxanne Persaud, allows the reimbursement of employment-related transportation expenses incurred due to the physical injuries sustained as a direct result of a crime.
- **Eligibility for the Address Confidentiality Program:** This bill, [S.5444](#), sponsored by Senator Julia Salazar, expands the category of eligible participants in the NYS Address Confidentiality Program to include victims of sexual offenses, stalking, and human trafficking. Essentially this bill will help protect victims of sexual offenses, victims of stalking, and human trafficking victims by permitting them to keep their current location confidential during Court proceedings.

Bill Sponsor, Senator Jamaal Bailey said, “Today, the State Senate took an important step in putting survivors of domestic and sexual assault first. In New York State, we should make it easier for survivors, and support them throughout their healing process. I am proud to sponsor a piece of legislation that will further strengthen orders of protection. Under this new legislation if a survivor of domestic violence has their order of protection breached by different parties, this bill would appropriately hold the parties fully accountable for their actions.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator David Carlucci said, “Domestic violence is a public health emergency, and we must take action now. These bills update our domestic violence laws, put survivors first, and will help save lives. Legislation I sponsor allows survivors to report an incident of domestic violence to any law enforcement agency in the state. This will keep survivors safer and help end the cycle of abuse survivors are often trapped in.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Brad Hoylman said, “Survivors of domestic violence should not have to fear that calling 911 will put them at risk of losing their home. Using nuisance laws to punish domestic violence survivors is callous and misguided, and the passage of my Right to Call 911 legislation will make it clear that this is not an acceptable practice in the State of New York. I’m grateful to be a member of a Conference that empowers and protects survivors and thank Leader Stewart Cousins for her leadership on this critical package of legislation.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Anna Kaplan said, “For far too long, survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence have faced significant barriers to justice in our legal system. These survivors have been repeatedly re-victimized by laws that don’t take into consideration the complicated decision one must make before coming forward and speaking out about abuse or breaking the cycle of violence. I’m proud to sponsor legislation that recognizes the

difficult situation faced by survivors, and extends their opportunity to seek the justice they deserve, and also to be a co-sponsor of the Senate Majority's full package of legislation that will tear down further barriers to justice."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Tim Kennedy said, "Victims of sexual violence have experienced profound trauma, and New York needs to do its part to ensure their safety is prioritized as they heal. I am proud to sponsor legislation that would allow victims of sexual violence to request that their voter records be sealed, so that their anonymity is protected and their aggressors are not able to easily repeat these heinous crimes. This bill would extend the same confidentiality to survivors of sexual violence that is already offered to victims of domestic violence, and close a critical gap in New York's current law."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Monica Martinez said, "I am proud of my colleagues in the State Legislature for their continued work to provide greater protection for victims. No individual should have to suffer because of the exposure of intimate images. This legislation expands the definition of coercion so that we can continue to send a strong message that this type of egregious behavior will no longer be tolerated in the State of New York."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Kevin Parker said, "Survivors should not be battered a second time when they are trying to create a new life for themselves. My legislation will allow survivors to end phone contracts so they are able to move on with their lives without the threat of being re-victimized. This legislative package is a part of the Senate Democratic Majority's commitment to aiding survivors of domestic violence. I remain committed to working with my colleagues in the Legislature to end the scourge of domestic violence and assist survivors and their families to get the services and protections they deserve."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Roxanne Persaud said, "Domestic Violence victims face enough struggles on a daily basis, and I think it is imperative that we help victims in their times of need. I am honored to sponsor two pieces of legislation that aim to help shoulder some of the burden. S1040 allows employees a reasonable accommodation in taking time off to, for example, seek medical attention or counseling, or appear in court on matters related to incidents of domestic violence. In addition, S5443 would allow victims to receive reimbursement of employment-related transportation expenses necessary as the result of a crime."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Julia Salazar said, "I deeply appreciate that our Leader has prioritized legislation that will expand protections for survivors of domestic violence and sexual violence. Collectively, these bills serve to empower survivors of violence to seek care and crucial services while also seeking to protect them from further harm and secondary trauma. The passage of my own bill particularly demonstrates our support for survivors of sexual violence and trafficking, an important step toward achieving justice."

Bill Sponsor, Senator James Sanders Jr. said, "Domestic violence has no place in New York State. It is our responsibility as citizens and lawmakers to ensure that we provide protections and support against this horrendous crime. The legislation that will pass to assist victims of domestic violence and sex crimes was created to better address this crime and provide greater protections for New Yorkers against domestic violence."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Diane Savino said, "This legislation gives domestic violence victims the opportunity to vote in a safe manner, ensuring that they do not have worry about encountering their abuser. While there are currently options to vote in person at the local Board of Elections, this still may not be the safest option if that county is still where the victim's abuser resides. I thank Leader Stewart-Cousins for taking up this bill and to the Senate for passing it alongside today's crime victims package."

Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris said, "The victims of sex crimes and domestic violence are among the most vulnerable in our state. These common sense bills keep these people safer and our communities strong."

Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. said, “Survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and other devastating crimes need and deserve our support to move forward in their lives, protect themselves from further abuse, and seek justice against those who have hurt them. This package of bills, including legislation I co-sponsor to punish those who coerce victims into producing or disseminating intimate images of themselves, sends a strong message that New York State stands with survivors during every step and every stage of their difficult journeys.”

Senator Alessandra Biaggi said, “As we work tirelessly to create preventative measures to end domestic and sexual violence, we must also establish laws that support existing victims. This suite of bills serves to protect survivors from further emotional and physical trauma, while prioritizing their safety over the interests of others. It is a critical first step towards creating a New York that puts survivors first.”

Senator Neil Breslin said, “Victims of domestic violence and sex crimes deserve as much protection under the law as we can provide. This legislative package is a tremendous step forward in making sure that victims have both the resources and recourse under the law they need.”

Senator Jim Gaughran said, “As a member of the Women's Committee, I am proud to support this package of legislation that will provide important protections against victims of domestic violence and sex crimes. We must unequivocally speak up for victims of these disturbing crimes and ensure they are provided the protections and resources they deserve. These bills will provide a range of relief and assistance for victims who for too long remained in the shadows of our system, afraid and alone.”

Senator Pete Harckham said, “Victims of domestic violence and sex crimes deserve the strongest protections so they can effectively deal with their abusers through the legal system while continuing to function in their daily lives. This passage of these bills will offer victims a wide range of protections that are critical to their safety as well as their economic and emotional recovery.”

Senator Liz Krueger said, “Domestic violence affects people from every background, from all walks of life, and across the spectrum of gender and sexuality. It can have devastating impacts on the lives, careers, and families of survivors. We must do more to ensure that New York State is a safe haven for those who have been subject to domestic violence. I commend my colleagues in the Majority Conference for leading on this critical issue.”

Senator Rachel May said, “Survivors of domestic violence and sex crimes face threats to their health and well-being on a near-constant basis. As legislators, it is our responsibility to protect residents of New York and to provide strong safeguards for those who need it most. This important package will protect survivors from eviction and job loss, and helps guarantee that every survivor can vote without worrying that their information will be disclosed. I thank my colleagues and Senate leadership for taking this matter seriously and proposing laws that will have a tangible beneficial impact on New York’s survivors.”

Senator Jen Metzger said, “This package of legislation will provide much needed protections to victims of domestic violence, and will extend the statute of limitations to better ensure justice for victims of abuse. With almost half of all women murdered in New York killed by an intimate partner, the many protections included in this legislative package will help keep victims safe and will save lives. It is long overdue.”

Senator Shelley B. Mayer said, “As an advocate for domestic violence survivors throughout my career, I am pleased that today the State Senate is passing important legislation to provide victims and survivors with the tools they need to escape the cycle of violence. This package of policies: increases the statute of limitations for survivors to bring a civil suit; ensures victims can take time off from work to obtain services, counseling or attend court proceedings; and provides the necessary safety survivors need by sealing certain public records. We need to continue to educate, advocate, and legislate to reduce domestic violence and address the critical needs of victims and survivors.”

Senator Jessica Ramos said, “Today, the New York State Senate Democratic majority is standing up for victims of domestic violence and sex crimes. With this package of bills, we are asserting our responsibility in addressing the wide-reaching ramifications of domestic violence and sex crimes on the lives of survivors. We must ensure that in New York, survivors have the tools they need to seek and obtain justice and live a safe life.”

Senator Gustavo Rivera said, “Today, the Senate Majority Conference is taking appropriate steps to ensure that survivors of domestic violence and victims of sex crimes are provided as many protections as possible under the law as they face such a difficult time in their lives. These measures will help us address the devastating impact domestic violence and sex crimes have in our communities.”

Senator Luis Sepulveda said, “Sex crimes and domestic violence remain pervasive heinous acts among our society. The majority of victims are women, who often have few available resources to escape their harmful situations. Victims suffering from injuries - both physical and psychological - need protective services that our new legislation will provide. As legislators, we will continue to work to create safer, healthier environments free from fear and abuse.”

Senator Jose Serrano said, “Domestic violence is an unfortunate reality for so many of our friends, family members, and neighbors. In fact, one-in-four women and one-in-seven men will experience physical violence by a partner in their lifetime. Today we have sent a message to survivors of domestic violence that they are not alone in their struggle, and that New York will do everything possible to ensure their safety and well-being as they exit a dangerous situation, but also later as they heal and move forward with their lives.”

Senator James Skoufis said, “Far too often, survivors of domestic violence and sex crimes have been left to fend for themselves; with this package of bills, legislators are no longer standing idly by while the legal and legislative systems work against, rather than for them. I am so proud to stand with my Senate colleagues in passing legislation to increase the statute of limitation, expand the definition of coercion, ensure victims receive services, and many more long-overdue protections. We must continue passing legislation that addresses issues before situations become worse for those in at-risk situations, and that's exactly what this package does.”

Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said, “The passage of these bills supporting and protecting survivors of domestic violence and sex crimes demonstrates our commitment to help vulnerable people in New York State. This legislation will finally give survivors the accessible support they deserve. In my district, immigrants are often left without the proper resources to protect themselves. They often feel isolated and these bills will help move us in the right direction. I thank my colleagues for their sponsorship, dedication, and steady support for the victims.”

Senator Kevin Thomas said, “We need to support survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault as they seek assistance and justice. With this legislation, New York State will be better equipped to protect survivors and families in their time of need. My Senate colleagues and I will continue to do everything in our power to combat sexual assault and ensure the security, dignity, and respect of survivors.”

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