



NEW YORK STATE SENATE DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

For Immediate Release: May 11, 2021

Contact: Jonathan Heppner | heppner@nysenate.gov | 518-455-2415

Senate Majority To Advance Legislation to Combat Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking

(Albany, NY) The Senate Democratic Majority today will advance legislation to support survivors of domestic violence and combat human trafficking in New York State that builds on the Conference’s continued work to provide greater protections for those impacted by domestic violence and the horrors of human trafficking. This package will relieve survivors of domestic violence from utility contracts, expand eligibility for the “Non-Parent” Grant, seize firearms from perpetrators, expand the statute of limitations on domestic violence claims, aid prosecutors in identifying repeat offenders, and protect the voting records of victims of sexual and domestic violence.

In addition, this legislative package will require public posting of human trafficking information, mandate state contractors to submit human trafficking prevention statements, expand the statute of limitations on human trafficking claims, and establish human trafficking recognition training for all lodging employees. This package also includes legislation to enact the “New York State Transparency in Supply Chains Act,” increase the legal marriage age to 18 and classify clergy members as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and maltreatment.

“Domestic violence has no place in New York State, and we in the state government have a responsibility to address this unacceptable scourge and provide assistance and support to those impacted by this horrible crime,” **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins** said. “We must also do everything we can to help end human trafficking and to aid this increasingly isolated group. When people start to learn about human trafficking and its signs, survivors can better receive the assistance they need. I am proud to take action on these serious issues where victims too often remain in the shadows, and I commend the sponsors for their efforts on these bills. We will continue to bring forth legislation to strengthen our community and foster an environment in which domestic violence and human trafficking is better recognized and prevented.”

The legislation being passed by the Senate Majority, includes:

- **Relief from Contracts:** This bill, [S.1557A](#), sponsored by Senator Kevin Parker, allows individuals to break contracts with utility, phone and television providers when fleeing instances of domestic violence.

- **Expand Eligibility for the "Non-Parent" Grant:** This bill, [S.2586](#), sponsored by Senator Jabari Brisport, will remove the requirement of establishing paternity or a child support order for certain applicants or recipients of aid to dependent children.
- **Domestic Violence Records for Prosecutors:** This bill, [S.404](#), sponsored by Senator Alessandra Biaggi, will allow prosecutors to have access to past orders of protection in domestic violence cases so they can charge abusers with criminal contempt if they violated a past order of protection.
- **Seizure of Firearms Following an Order of Protection:** This bill, [S.6363](#), sponsored by Senator Shelley Mayer, requires the court to order a search and immediate seizure of certain firearms when a defendant refuses to surrender firearms upon the issuance of an order of protection.
- **The Phoenix Act:** This bill, [S.3020A](#), sponsored by Senator Kevin Parker, will expand the statute of limitations for domestic violence cases.
- **Voter Record Confidentiality:** This bill, [S.1555](#), sponsored by Senator Zellnor Myrie, permits a person who is a victim of domestic violence to have their voter registration records sealed upon delivering an affirmation to a board of elections, instead of applying to court.
- **Sealing Voting Records For Domestic Violence Victims:** This bill, [S.3855](#), sponsored by Senator Tim Kennedy, allows victims of sexual violence protection against their attacker by enabling them to have their voter records sealed in the same manner as victims of domestic violence.
- **Posting Human Trafficking Hotline Information:** This bill, [S.3374](#), sponsored by Senator Jamaal Bailey, requires signs developed by the State Liquor Authority to be posted providing human trafficking information and referral hotline numbers in all establishments selling alcoholic beverages and adult entertainment establishments.
- **State Contractors to Submit a Statement on Human Trafficking:** This bill, [S.1216](#), sponsored by Senator Brian Benjamin, will require all parties submitting bids for competitively bid state procurement contracts to affirm under penalty of perjury that the goods, work or services will be supplied or performed without doing business with any organization, person or entity engaging in human trafficking and to submit their written anti-human trafficking policy, if any.
- **Statute of Limitation Extension:** This bill, [S.672](#), sponsored by Senator James Sanders, Jr. extends the statute of limitations from 10 years to 15 years to give human trafficking victims more time to file a civil cause of action.
- **Human Trafficking Training and Awareness:** This bill, [S.244A](#), sponsored by Senator Shelley Mayer, will require lodging facilities to provide a human-trafficking recognition training program to all employees.
- **New York State Transparency in Supply Chains Act:** This bill, [S.748](#), sponsored by Senator Alessandra Biaggi, will establish the "New York State Transparency in Supply Chains Act" requiring businesses within the state to disclose their preventative measures against human trafficking.
- **Increases the Age of Consent for Marriage:** This bill, [S.3086](#), sponsored by Senator Senator Julia Salazar, will increase the age of consent for purposes of marriage to the age of eighteen.
- **The Child Abuse Reporting Expansion Act:** This bill, [S.1399](#), sponsored by Senator Brad Hoylman, adds clergy members to the list of mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and maltreatment.

Bill Sponsor, Senator Jamaal Bailey, said, “Cases of human trafficking and domestic violence have skyrocketed recently in New York. This package of legislation works towards addressing the scourge of human trafficking and increasing the level of awareness of this ongoing societal problem so that we can end it. I am proud to have sponsored one of the pieces of legislation in this package. My bill, S3374, would mandate that any establishment with a liquor license as well as all adult entertainment venues must have a sign that prominently displays contact information related to the human trafficking hotline and displayed in their business. Additionally, this package addresses common loopholes that are often used against survivors of domestic violence. With the passage of these bills, survivors can rest assured that their voting records and information will be sealed, they will be provided with contract relief when fleeing due to domestic violence, and there will be a seizure of firearms after an order of protection is issued. This legislative package is a great step in ensuring that we are protecting our survivors and working towards preventing human trafficking across the State of New York. I would like to thank Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins for her leadership and my colleagues who joined me in sponsoring legislation for this package.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Alessandra Biaggi, said, "Domestic violence and human trafficking are pervasive issues across New York State, and it is critical that we empower and protect survivors. By enacting legislation to raise awareness of the severity of these issues and make it easier for survivors to get help, New York can ease the burden for survivors seeking justice and prevent future violence. I am proud to join my colleagues today in passing this important legislative package, and I thank Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for prioritizing this issue."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Brian Benjamin, said, "The time is now for us to eradicate human trafficking from our state, and this legislative package is a strong step forward in our efforts. I'm proud to work together with my colleagues in the State Senate to end predation and abuse in New York and to sponsor this bill to ensure our business partners are doing the same."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Jabari Brisport, said, "There are no acceptable reasons for knowingly putting children or their families in harm's way — the state's desire to collect child support payments is certainly no exception. S.2586 is about listening to and respecting families of every variety, and not letting red tape jeopardize their well-being."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Tim Kennedy, said, “These reforms will prioritize the safety of survivors of domestic violence, and expand the opportunity for justice and accountability in cases of abuse. I'm proud to move these bills forward alongside my colleagues in order to truly strengthen protective measures for those in their most vulnerable hour.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Shelley Mayer, said, “Domestic violence and human trafficking are persistent problems in New York and across the country. I am pleased the Senate Majority is taking substantial steps to protect and empower survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking. I am pleased that my bills, S.6363 and S.244A, are part of this package. S.6363 is a common sense measure that requires the court to order the search for and immediate seizure of firearms if a protective order is in place and the judge has already determined possession of firearms poses a danger. S.244A will ensure lodging facilities' employees are provided training to recognize human-trafficking. These bills substantially expand protections of survivors and expand tools available to break the cycles of violence.”

Bill Sponsor, Senator Zellnor Myrie, said, "Voting is a fundamental right, but no one should be forced to choose between exercising their rights and protecting their privacy from abuse. I'm proud of our legislation that makes it easier to protect voter registration records in cases of domestic violence, and the entire package of bills the Senate is advancing today. Our laws must protect survivors of domestic violence."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Kevin Parker, said, "Leaving a domestic violence situation is a courageous decision and a complicated process. It is crucial we remove every barrier we can to hold perpetrators accountable, ensuring survivors have the support they need to end the cycle of abuse and seek justice. I am proud to stand with my colleagues in the Senate Democratic Majority to pass this life saving legislation and I thank Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for her leadership on this issue."

Bill Sponsor, Senator Juila Salazar, said, " This legislative package is an important and necessary step toward improving the lives of survivors of domestic violence and survivors of human trafficking in New York. Additionally, while many of us may not think that child marriages continue to take place in our country today, data shows that thousands of child marriages continue to occur in the United States. Child marriages are detrimental to the mental and physical health of the young people involved, the vast majority of whom are women. Studies have shown that women who were married before they reached adulthood experienced higher rates of mental illness and have a 23% greater risk of developing a serious health condition than other women. By passing this legislation today, we are bringing New York closer to joining the four other states that have truly ended child marriage, without exception."

Senate Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris said, "Victims of domestic and gender-based violence and human trafficking experience horrific wrongs and should not be subject to continued injustices due to bad public policy. The Senate is taking action to enact serious, common sense measures to alleviate continued trauma and help survivors heal."

Senator Andrew Gounardes said, "With the recent surge in domestic violence cases during the pandemic, the legislation included in this package is needed now more than ever. These bills will increase protections for those who are most vulnerable to these crimes, and offer new avenues of recourse in the face of horrific domestic violence and human trafficking cases. By putting these bills forward, we're taking a significant step to ensure that victims can receive the care and protection they deserve, and that we take preventative measures to deter this damaging behavior."

Senator Peter Harckham said, "This important package of legislation addresses the scope and seriousness of domestic violence and human trafficking in New York, and I commend my Senate colleagues for providing these necessary solutions to protect women. Indeed, our commitment to upholding the rights, safety and dignity of our residents must be unwavering."

Senator Robert Jackson said, "Violence and abuse at the hands of a loved one are frightening, degrading, and confusing experiences. Human trafficking is considered one of the most pressing human rights issues of our time. It is important to recognize that human trafficking and domestic violence don't occur in silos, and often leave public traces. I am proud to be part of a Senate majority committed to legislating the tools and resources survivors need to protect themselves and better equipping our society to recognize and act on warning signs of domestic violence and human trafficking."

Senator Brad Hoylman, said, "New York State must do everything in its power to protect victims of human trafficking and domestic violence from their abusers. This package of legislation will help countless New Yorkers by allowing courts to immediately seize firearms upon the issuance of an order of protection, increase the age of consent for marriage to 18, and extend the statute of limitations for domestic violence and human trafficking cases. I am deeply grateful for Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins' unwavering commitment to victims rights and protections, and I am proud to vote for these bills today."

Senator Anna M. Kaplan said "No community is immune from the scourge of domestic violence and human trafficking, and we must do everything we can to break the cycle of violence, protect survivors, and hold abusers and traffickers accountable. I'm proud to support legislation being passed by the Senate Majority that will strengthen protections for survivors and expand opportunities for justice, and I applaud the bill sponsors and Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins for their leadership on this critically important issue."

Senator Liz Krueger said, "A fundamental job of government is to look after the most vulnerable among us. Victims and survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking not only need to be protected from their abusers and exploiters, they also need to have the barriers removed that prevent them from escaping, and to be provided with the tools and opportunities to build a new life for themselves and their families. I thank my colleagues for moving this important package of bills today, which takes New York State one step closer to being a safe haven for those who have been trafficked and abused."

Senator Sean Ryan said, "With this comprehensive package of legislation, the Senate Majority has advanced several important measures to protect victims of domestic violence and eradicate human trafficking in New York. These bills take action to ensure the safety of the members in our communities who are most vulnerable to violence and exploitation – and to hold abusers accountable."

Senator James Skoufis said, "As Senators, it's our duty to right the wrongs in our legal system that enable perpetrators of domestic violence and human trafficking to operate under the radar, and their victims to suffer in silence. I am honored to stand beside my colleagues in moving this important slate of legislation forward, giving victims the support they deserve."

Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said, "The horrors of domestic abuse and human trafficking usually happen behind closed doors and in the shadows. This legislation helps empower the victims of these crimes to break free from the cycle of abuse in which they are trapped. It also alerts New Yorkers to the warning signs of exploitation. I applaud my colleagues in the Democratic Majority for moving this legislation forward. Predators who commit these heinous acts will not stop until we do all we can to stop them."

Senator Kevin Thomas said, "Human trafficking and domestic violence are devastating human rights violations that have no place in New York. I am proud to join my Senate colleagues in passing legislation to help end the business of human trafficking, provide services and compassion to survivors, and strengthen New York's response to domestic violence and other crimes."

###

Follow on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/NYSenDems>
New York State Senate | senatedemocraticmajority@nysenate.gov | [518-455-2415](tel:518-455-2415)