

# Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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## **Senator Helming: Senate Passes Brittany’s Law; Assembly Majority, Governor Need to Join Fight**

GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming today announced that for the eighth year in a row, the New York State Senate passed a bill that she co-sponsors that would enact Brittany’s Law and establish a violent felony offender registry. The legislation is named after 12-year-old Brittany Passalacqua, who was brutally murdered along with her mother, 34-year-old Helen Buchel, in Geneva in 2009. The man convicted of killing Brittany and her mother, John Edward Brown, was a parolee released from prison after serving only 2 ½ years of a 3-year sentence for violently assaulting his infant daughter in 2003.

“Once again, the Senate has passed Brittany’s Law so that we can protect our citizens from violent felony offenders and prevent tragedies such as the one that happened to Brittany and her mother. And once again, we are waiting for the Assembly Majority and the Governor to take action and put this critical measure up for a vote. The Assembly Majority and the Governor claim they support victims of domestic violence, and this is one step they can take to help victims. We need to give our law enforcement officers and the public a way to track these violent offenders once they return to our communities. We have a registry for gun owners, for sex offenders, and even – in New York City – for those who abuse animals, yet there is no registry to keep track of violent felons. Those convicted of sex crimes must register, so a similar system for those convicted of violent crimes just makes sense. Thank you to my Senate colleagues for once again supporting this much-needed, commonsense legislation. On behalf of Dale Driscoll, Brittany’s grandmother and Helen’s mother, I strongly urge the Assembly Majority and the Governor to do the same,” Senator Helming said.

This measure (S.1107) would require violent felony offenders to register with the State Division of Criminal Justice Services upon discharge, parole, or release from any state or local facility, hospital, or institution, and it would allow the dissemination of and access to certain information to the public. It would also establish annual registration requirements and guidelines to allow state and local law enforcement agencies to monitor the whereabouts of violent felony offenders.

Though several other states already have some form of a violent felony offender registry, New York State has not yet taken constructive steps to track the whereabouts of violent felony offenders who, as research indicates, are likely to repeat violent crimes upon release from prison. In the wake of violent attacks such as the one against Brittany and her mother, it has become clear that efforts to protect our communities and our families from these vicious offenders must increase. This legislation would equip law enforcement officers with a critical investigative tool in the fight against violent crime and provide our communities with important information regarding the risk posed by violent felony offenders upon their release from custody. One of government's duties is to protect the public from violent offenders, and registering convicted felons re-entering the community would protect people from becoming victims of violent crime.

This bill has been sent to the Assembly (A404), where it is sponsored by Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther.

*Senator Helming represents the 54<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which consists of Seneca and Wayne Counties, parts of Cayuga and Ontario Counties, and the towns of Lansing and Webster. For more information, please visit Senator Helming's [website](#), or follow @SenatorHelming on Facebook or Twitter.*

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