

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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Senator Helming Honors Crime Victims and Their Families

GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming is recognizing National Crime Victims’ Rights Week the week of April 7 to April 13 by highlighting several of the initiatives she is working on in the State Senate to enhance protections for crime victims in our region and across New York State. Since taking office, Senator Helming has been a strong advocate for crime victims and their families and will keep fighting to ensure that crime victims and their families are treated fairly.

“The slogan for National Crime Victims’ Rights Week is ‘Expand the circle, reach all victims.’ That is exactly what I have been doing since taking office as State Senator – advocating on behalf of all of our crime victims and their families and ensuring their voices are heard and their rights are protected. Our victims of crime, especially violent and sex-related crimes, are often among our most vulnerable citizens who need our help as a government and as a society to speak up for them and make sure they get justice. From helping establish a domestic violence shelter in my district to fighting for the rights of pregnant women who have been assaulted and lost their children, I am proud to lead several initiatives to support all of our crime victims and their families. I will continue this fight until all of these initiatives become law, and I will continue advocating for those who have been the victims of crime. Thank you to the many families and advocates for our crime victims who have worked alongside me in this fight,” Senator Helming said.

The initiatives that Senator Helming is working to support crime victims and their families and the organizations that serve them include:

- A domestic violence shelter in Seneca County: Last year, Senator Helming secured \$300,000 so that Safe Harbors of the Finger Lakes Inc. can build and establish a domestic violence shelter in Seneca County. Currently, there are six counties in New York State that do not have a domestic violence shelter within their boundaries, and three of them are Seneca, Ontario, and Yates Counties. This shelter would serve those three counties.
- Increased time between parole board hearings: Senator Helming has met several times with Elaine Hartnagel, the grandmother of Curtis Rizzo, a 17-month-old toddler who was brutally stabbed to death along with Cindy Lewis, his 15-year-old babysitter, but her classmate Chad Campbell nearly 30 years ago. Senator Helming has also met with Carole Bauer, Curtis’ mother, and Nancy Lewis-Bardo, Cindy’s mother. Through the families’ efforts, Senator Helming is sponsoring a bill (S.4354) that would increase the time between parole board hearings – such as ones their killer gets to receive – from two years

to five years. This would give families of crime victims a greater period of peace between hearings. Another bill Senator Helming sponsors (S.1782) would allow all family members and interested parties to make statements before a parole board. Currently, for example, grandparents are not allowed to testify about the impact the crime has had on them.

- **Brittany's Law:** This legislation (S.4644) 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. Senator Helming's bill would establish a violent felony offender registry similar to the existing sex offender registry. The man convicted of killing Brittany and her mother was a parolee released from prison after serving a sentence for violently assaulting his infant daughter in 2003. If Helen and her family had access to a violent offender registry and knew that her boyfriend was a violent convict, then she and Brittany might be alive today.
- **Clara's Law:** This legislation (S.1406) is named after the late Clara Mae Bowman, who was sexually abused by an intensive care unit nurse at a Florida hospital in 2006. Her abuser resigned from the hospital amid the allegations and went to work at another hospital, where he later abused another patient. After meeting with Edward Bowman, Mrs. Bowman's husband, Senator Helming introduced a bill that would require hospitals and health care facilities to report incidents of a sexual offense to the State Departments of Health and Education. This would stop health care workers who have abused patients from moving to other hospitals or health care facilities without those facilities knowing their background.
- **Penalties for assaulting pregnant women:** The Reproductive Health Act removed abortion from New York State's criminal statutes, meaning someone who assaults or murders a pregnant woman and causes her to lose her child could not be charged for the death of the child. With Assemblyman Brian Manktelow, Senator Helming has introduced legislation (S.4740) that would establish the specific crime of assault on a pregnant woman.

Senator Helming represents the 54th 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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