

# Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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## **Sen. Helming Announces Signing of Bill to Help People With Special Needs**

GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming today announced that her legislation to help improve communication between people who have developmental disabilities and others has been signed into law. The legislation (S.2565) creates a new optional identification card that can be given to law enforcement officers or other first responders in an emergency and conveys important details, such as potential difficulties with interpersonal communications or physical contact or an inability to respond verbally, as well as additional contact information.

“This optional identification card will allow an individual with a developmental disability, such as autism, to more easily communicate important information about their diagnosis. As someone who began my career managing services for those with developmental disabilities, I know firsthand how important this law is. By creating one standardized card, individuals who choose to obtain such a card will have a new tool at their disposal when interacting with law enforcement officers or first responders. Coupled with funding secured in the New York State budget to train law enforcement officers and first responders on how to respond to mental health situations, this initiative will help keep the public and our emergency personnel safe and will help protect the individual. It will make others aware of certain behaviors the individual has or may be lacking that might make it seem as if the individual is intentionally refusing to cooperate. I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for supporting this important legislation, and I thank the Governor for signing it into law,” Senator Helming said.

The law authorizes the state Office for People with Developmental Disabilities to create the optional identification card, which would contain the cardholder’s contact information and important information about the cardholder’s developmental disabilities that may be relevant during interactions with law enforcement officers, emergency personnel, and other individuals. The cards can be given to first responders in an emergency and conveys important details such as potential difficulties with interpersonal communications or physical contact or an inability to respond verbally.

*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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