



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shirley L. Huntley

## Sexual Assault Awareness Month

SHIRLEY L. HUNTLEY April 8, 2010

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### **APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH**

#### **Senator Shirley L. Huntley Urges Safety and Prevention of Sexual Violence**

Senator Shirley L. Huntley (D-Jamaica) recognizes and is a strong proponent of April being designated as Sexual Assault Awareness Month with the goal in mind of raising awareness about sexual violence. One of the most prevalent issues with sexual assaults is the lack of awareness that victims have when it comes to using the resources that are available to them to report the assault, allowing assailants to remain on the streets.

The senator notes the need to raise awareness about sexual violence and help victims access the resources they need to bring their attacker to justice, as well as recover emotionally and physically.

Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual contact from another individual, including rape, fondling, sexual harassment and stalking. The act of sexual assault can happen to anyone

regardless of age, gender, race, sexual orientation or ability; the rate of sexual assault victims is significantly higher amongst women as 1 in 6 women are likely to experience some form of sexual assault.

Approximately 1 in 33 men are sexually assaulted.

When considering those committing sexual assault, it is important to remember the assailant is not always a stranger, but often a person who would be least expected, including friends, neighbors or family.

There are different precautions someone should take to decrease the possibility of being sexually assaulted. Never walk alone if possible, try to be around or walk with groups of people, especially at night. If you cannot walk with other people make sure to walk in areas where there is plentiful light. Another precaution is to drink responsibly, so judgment and motor control is not impaired.

“Based on the information about the rise in sexual assaults, it is extremely important to continue the campaign against sexual assaults in our state,” Senator Shirley L. Huntley said. “Hopefully, by continuing to educate young men and women, along with the communities they are in, about sexual assault prevention we can reduce the number of individuals who become victims of one of these terrible assaults.”

The senator recognized that the Sexual Assault Awareness Month national campaign for 2010 focuses on what is turning into a very serious problem on college campuses throughout the state. According to statistics from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center:

- Among college women, 9 in 10 victims of rape and sexual assault knew their offender;

- Almost 12.8% of completed rapes, 35% of attempted rapes, and 22.9% of threatened rapes happened during a date;
- Among college women, only 12% of rapes were reported to law enforcement.

If you're sexually assaulted the first thing you should do is call 911, where they will provide you with the necessary steps you should take. Depending on the situation and if you're injured, the manner in which 911 will direct you may vary.

For more information on sexual assault and Sexual Assault Awareness month, visit [www.nsvrc.org/saam](http://www.nsvrc.org/saam), [www.rainn.org](http://www.rainn.org) or [www.ovm.usdoj.gov/sexassault.htm](http://www.ovm.usdoj.gov/sexassault.htm).

If you or anyone you know has been the victim of a sexual assault please contact the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE (800-656-4673).