



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shirley L. Huntley

## Domestic Violence Survivors

SHIRLEY L. HUNTLEY June 16, 2010

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### **Senator Huntley Stands Together with Domestic Violence Survivors**

#### **Legislative package establishes stronger rights, strengthens services**

Senator Shirley L. Huntley (D-Jamaica) announced passage of an extensive 12-point legislative package that will significantly enhance domestic violence survivors' safety, improve state services available, and strengthen penalties against those who inflict the pain of domestic violence on others.

In New York State, the statistics show cases of domestic violence have become an epidemic. Each year, approximately 400,000 domestic incidents are reported to police departments. Moreover, 20-percent of total assaults outside New York City in 2008 were committed by "intimate partners."

Legislation in this package includes:

- Elections reforms to prevent a survivor's identity from being found through a FOIL request.
- Creation of an address confidentiality program.
- Prohibition of housing and employment discrimination based on the violence suffered.
- Increased penalties for witness tampering and repeat offenders of orders of protection.

"Domestic Violence should never happen nor be tolerated by any person or society. Anyone can be a victim at anytime and it often isn't taken seriously until the situation culminates into violence. Domestic violence is often preceded by verbal, psychological, and emotional abuse these of which can leave lasting scars and damages in a person's life," said Senator Huntley. She continued, "Most of all children who are subject to these heinous cowardly acts can suffer the most hurtful consequence. When these children grow older they can suffer from emotional anguish and trauma, physical injuries from the abuse, and of growing concern repeat the cycle of abuse by committing these acts themselves. Proactive measures must be implemented to protect spouses or partners of gender, families, and especially children from suffering domestic violence."

Unfortunately, the 2008 domestic violence statistics are significantly higher across the board than those from 2007; intimate partner homicides increased 25-percent statewide and 45-percent in counties outside of New York City. The 31 Domestic Violence Courts handled more than 31,000 cases in 2008, an increase of nearly 7,000 from 2007.

The senator added, "we cannot continue to allow domestic violence occurrences to increase year after year and this legislative package is a significant step in the right direction."