



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruth Hassell-Thompson

## Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson Pushes Bill Through Senate to Secure 1.8 Million Dollars for Rape Crisis Centers

RUTH HASSELL-THOMPSON August 11, 2010

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(Albany, New York) On the last day of the legislative session and overshadowed by high profile debates on Hydro-fracking and whether to empower the SUNY Board of Trustees to raise tuition at select college campuses, Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson's budget bill to provide \$1.8 million dollars to rape crisis centers throughout New York State passed unanimously and without debate.

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, due to a technical oversight, advocacy groups were in frenzy because monies for rape crisis centers were left out of the budget. "Many of these rape crisis centers operate out of hospitals and local community offices and it would have been tragic to leave traumatized women and children stranded alone in their greatest hour of need. Fortunately, the Democratic Leadership realized the magnitude of the problem and supported the introduction of the bill which was then voted on and passed unanimously by both sides of the aisle," said Senator Hassell-Thompson.

Carolyn Fish, the Executive Director of Rockland Family Shelter, stated that the loss of monies would have "dire consequences" in her community and that Hassell-Thompson deserved her "deepest gratitude."

Raini Baudendistel, Executive Director, Crime Victims Assistance Center, Inc., of Binghamton, stated that funds were “critical to providing direct services for victims of sexual assault and abuse throughout New York State. The loss of funding would have meant the provision of no rape crisis intervention, counseling or programming for the over 50 adult victims we serve every year in Broome County.” She continued that “at our greatest hour of need Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson realized what would happen if our centers were forced to shut down. She listened, assessed the situation and acted to fix the problem.”

Harriet Lessel, Executive Director, NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault, stated, “We are grateful to Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson in restoring state funding for services for sexual violence survivors. This state funding sends an important message to survivors and their families that recovery is a priority.”

The bill has been sent to Governor Patterson with the hopes that he will sign it into law.