



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

“Laura Cummings’ Law” Passed in State Senate

GEORGE D. MAZIARZ May 26, 2011

| ISSUE: **VICTIMS**

Legislation will protect New York’s most vulnerable citizens

State Senator George Maziarz (R-C, Newfane) announced that legislation to improve the operations of the Child and Adult Protective Services systems in order to prevent tragedies like the murder of 23-year old North Collins resident Laura Cummings unanimously passed in the New York State Senate today. The measure has been dubbed the “Laura Cummings’ Law” in her memory.

Laura Cummings, a mentally and physically challenged young adult, was smothered to death by her mother on January 21, 2010 after a lifetime of physical, mental, and sexual abuse by some members of her family. Her death occurred despite numerous complaints to Erie County Department of Social Services officials about the torture she was enduring.

“The system failed Laura Cummings,” Senator Maziarz said. “Somehow, someone should have been able to step inside this home and put a stop to the constant terror Laura faced. This law will offer greater protections for some of the most vulnerable members of our society. If these provisions had been in place, Laura would be alive today.”

There are three major components to the law:

- After the second report of abuse of a child or an impaired adult, Child or Adult Protective Services will be empowered and required to seek a court order to enter the premises and investigate the inside of a home when access has been denied by the homeowner.
- Child Protective Services will be allowed to share information about prior abuse reports with Adult Protective Services once a complaint of abuse of an impaired adult has been made.
- It shall be a Class A misdemeanor to deny or attempt to deny any investigation of Child or Adult Protective Services when they are trying to access to an alleged victim for an interview.

"It baffles the mind to think about how terribly a parent can abuse a child," Senator Maziarz added. "But regardless of how unimaginable a horrific scene like this appears to most of us, we must be vigilant that there is no shortcoming in the law or in our ability to take action to get someone in need out of a dangerous and life-threatening situation."

Senator Maziarz' legislation was co-sponsored by a bipartisan group of a dozen senators, including every member of the Western New York Senate Delegation. Assemblyman John Ceretto will be sponsoring a same-as measure in the Assembly.