



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruth Hassell-Thompson

## Senator Hassell-Thompson Urges Governor to Sign Bill Extending Stay at Dv Shelters

RUTH HASSELL-THOMPSON June 18, 2012

| ISSUE: **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

A bill passed by the New York State Senate and the New York State Assembly would extend the length of stay for families seeking refuge in a domestic violence shelter to 180 days, an increase of 45 days over the current law. Senate Bill 6308-A/Assembly Bill 2651-B, primarily sponsored by Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson, Senator Greg Ball and Assemblywoman Rhoda Jacobs, will soon be delivered to Governor Cuomo who must decide whether he will sign the bill into law or veto it. “I urge Governor Cuomo to sign this bill. By extending the length of stay permitting domestic violence victims and their families to stay in shelters longer, we give to them the opportunity to obtain safe and permanent housing instead of being forced into general homeless shelters or return to their abusers,” said Senator Hassell-Thompson.

The New York City Council reported that domestic violence victims and their families face distinct barriers in obtaining independence because abusers often steal documents needed for employment and educational purposes. Additionally, victims are subjected to physical and sexual violence which require sufficient time for healing, counseling and treatment for the children.

Every day New York State's criminal justice system and network of service providers are inundated with cases of domestic violence. The statistics paint a grim picture. New York State courts issued 301,488 orders of protection in 2010. During that same timeframe almost one-quarter of all assaults - a staggering 29,030 were committed by an intimate partner *in upstate New York alone*. Statewide, 73 intimate partner homicides were reported in 2010.

“Every person or organization committed to this cause should feel free to write to the Governor and ask him to sign this bill into law. In life, losing your home must be one of the most traumatic events a family can experience. We need this bill to help victims of abuse and to help their children. I urge everyone to get involved and take a moment of your time and become part of the solution,” said Senator Hassell-Thompson.

The bill is supported by Safehorizon, the New York City Council, Sanctuary for Families, Good Shepherd Services and other domestic violence organizations.

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