



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

Senator Andrew Lanza joins the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition, Survivors of Sex Trafficking and Government Leaders to Push Bill to Hold Perpetrators Accountable and Stop Re-victimization

ANDREW J LANZA May 21, 2013

Sex trafficking survivors, their advocates, and government leaders called on New York State legislators to make urgently needed reforms in New York State's response to human trafficking at a press conference at 10:30 am on Tuesday May 21st in Albany. Pointing to the dearth of prosecutions of traffickers and buyers in a State the FBI has designated a trafficking hub, especially those who abuse and exploit children for prostitution, speakers will urge the legislature to pass the Trafficking Victims Protection and Justice Act (A.2240/S.2135).

The press conference was sponsored by Sanctuary for Families, the largest provider of services to victims of domestic violence and sex trafficking in the State, the New York Center for Juvenile Justice which advocates for improvements in our Juvenile Justice system and the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition, which represents over 100 organizations State-wide.

The TVPJA will strengthen New York laws to fight human trafficking by increasing protection for victims (particularly sexually exploited children), holding buyers and traffickers accountable and preventing the re-victimization of trafficking victims by the justice system.

Joining Senate Republican Leader Dean G. Skelos, Assemblywoman Amy Paulin and Senator Andrew Lanza at the press conference were members of the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition, including:

- “Kenya,” sex trafficking survivor from Sanctuary for Families
- Dorchen Leidholdt, Director of the Center for Battered Women’s Legal Services at Sanctuary for Families
- Sonia Ossorio, President of NYC-NOW
- Denise Murphy McGraw, co-chairwoman of the Junior Leagues of New York State Public Affairs Committee
- Sean Wrench, Director and Founder of Forsaken Generation, Syracuse, NY
- Judge Michael Corriero, executive director of the New York Center for Juvenile Justice
- Gonzalo Martínez de Vedia, Human Trafficking Specialist, the Worker Justice Center, Rochester, NY
- Lauren Hersh, New York Director, Equality Now

Senate Republican Leader Dean G. Skelos said, “The depraved indifference shown by those who exploit human beings for sex is unfathomable, but it is real and can affect any community. I applaud Senator Lanza and Assemblywoman Paulin for their work on this urgent problem and thank all the organizations and individuals who are helping us put an end to human trafficking here in New York.”

"Exploiting human beings for sex has to be one of the most heinous crimes in our modern day society," Assembly Member Amy Paulin (D) said. "I am proud to reintroduce this bill, which recognizes that buying children for sex is child abuse. It also increases penalties for the criminals – the traffickers supporting this brutal trade – and gives law enforcement increased tools to put them in jail. By ensuring access to social services, it also helps the victims break the vicious cycle of dependency and humiliation."

"Our bill is a long awaited measure to help protect those people in New York State who are particularly vulnerable," said Senator Andrew Lanza (R). "We must pass the Trafficking Victims Protection and Justice Act to end the re-victimization of trafficked people by our justice system and hold those who exploit them accountable."

"New York State can and must pass the Trafficking Victims Protection and Justice Act, which I am proud to co-sponsor" said Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (D/WF). "Doing so will send a clear signal to victims that we value their lives and will send an even clearer message to criminals that their time has come. I applaud Assemblymember Paulin, Senator Lanza, and Sanctuary for Families for their work on this bill, and will continue to fight alongside advocates and my colleagues to see that it becomes law."

"I am pleased to work in a bipartisan manner to ensure justice for victims of human trafficking. This is a growing threat to our community, as witnessed by the 33 people arrested by ICE for human trafficking in Newburgh, Poughkeepsie and elsewhere since last October. We cannot allow for this horrific activity to continue," said Assemblyman Steve Katz (R/C/I)

"This groundbreaking law would make our State the leader in the fight against human trafficking," said Dorchen Leidholdt, Director of the Center for Battered Women's Legal Services at Sanctuary for Families. "Law enforcement and advocacy leaders stand united behind this crucially important legislation which would make New York State hostile territory for pimps, traffickers and sex industry buyers."

"There are few states in our country with as compelling a need as New York to be tough on the crime of trafficking," said Sonia Ossorio, president of NOW-NYC. "New York should be on the forefront of this issue. A strong law lets the people of New York know we care about human rights and it lets traffickers know it's a new day in our great state and their free reign on our streets is over."

"Teenagers who are victims of sex trafficking urgently need services and support, not criminalization. They need to be seen and treated, not according to an ill-conceived adult criminal standard, but rather, precisely for who they are: New York's children," said Judge Michel Corriero, executive director of the New York Center for Juvenile Justice

"Our organization started all because of a 12 year old girl we were working with that had been trafficked for 2 years. She was forced to service up to 40 men a day. At the age of 12 she committed suicide. The men who raped her every day are still out there because we don't have the right laws in place to prosecute them. It is critical that we pass TVPJA, our children's lives depend on it." Sean Wrench, director and founder of Forsaken Generation, Syracuse, NY.

"Human trafficking is a scourge on all communities and all walks of life," said Denise Murphy McGraw the co-chairwoman of the Junior Leagues of New York State Public Affairs Committee. "The 8000 women of the Junior League, representing 17 communities throughout New York state decided to come together to help tackle this atrocious issue because we are mothers and sisters. We know this is happening in upscale towns and inner city neighborhoods. It has to end in New York now."

"By stiffening penalties against perpetrators of labor trafficking activities and ensuring that victims receive adequate legal and social support, this legislation is an important step toward ending the epidemic of human trafficking in New York State," said Milan Bhatt, Co-Executive Director of the Worker Justice Center of NY.

"Sex Trafficking causes significant and long term trauma to its victims. Traffickers routinely rape, beat and brand victims over an extended period of time. This crime is inherently violent and penalties must reflect this reality," said Lauren Hersh, New York Director, Equality Now.

"Young girls are being sold on our streets and our justice system is treating them like criminals," stated, Jewish Child Care Association's CEO Richard Altman. "What these young people need is treatment to help them escape abuse and heal, not stigmatization and re-victimization by the legal system."

Key provisions of the full bill are:

- Ensuring that those who buy sex from children face the same penalties as those who commit statutory rape;

- Eliminating the requirement that prosecutors prove coercion in cases against the sex traffickers of children;
- Ensuring that trafficked children receive service and shelter;
- Enabling sex trafficking victims to defend themselves when charged with prostitution;
- Recognizing that sex trafficking is a violent crime and ensuring that labor traffickers face prison time;
- Giving prosecutors the investigative tools they need to build strong cases against people who own or manage prostitution businesses or are pimping young people age eighteen or younger.

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About Sanctuary for Families

Sanctuary for Families is the leading nonprofit agency in New York State dedicated exclusively to serving domestic violence victims, sex trafficking victims, and their children. Each year, we help thousands of victims and their children build safe lives through a range of high quality services.