



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

Senate Passes Bonacic Bill on Child Abuse Reporting

JOHN J. BONACIC June 12, 2013

The New York State Senate today passed legislation (S.2016) sponsored by State Senator John Bonacic (R/C/I- Mt. Hope), which would require reports made to the State’s Child Abuse Hotline be investigated, when made by mandated reporters such as physicians, social workers, or law enforcement. The bill passed the Senate by with unanimous, bi-partisan support.

The legislation was initially prompted after the brutal 1998 murder of 3 year old Christopher Gardner of Bloomingburg. Before he was killed, a mandated reporter had, according to multiple published reports in the Times Herald Record, called the child abuse hotline claiming the child had been abused, but nobody followed up.

“This bill stands for the simple proposition that when a doctor, social worker or law enforcement official calls the child abuse hotline, and indicates they believe abuse is occurring, somebody in an office somewhere does not decide to overrule that trained expert,” Senator Bonacic said.

After the 1998 murder, groups sprang up around the Hudson Valley to lobby for stronger laws and better protect children. Parents lobbied Albany for the changes, but the Assembly refused to act. In fact, the then Assembly Chairman, according to a 2010 Times Herald Record article, grossly misunderstood the nature of the mandated reporter system.

Bonacic urged the Assembly to pass the legislation. “When a bill passes the Senate unanimously– with every Democrat and every Republican in agreement, and cannot even get a vote in the Assembly, there is no good excuse. The Assembly should vote on this legislation. It is just the right thing to do,” Bonacic concluded.