



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

## Serrano/Rosenthal Announce Legislation to Close Loophole in NYS Child Safety Law

JOSÉ M. SERRANO January 13, 2014

| ISSUE: **CHILDREN**

### **Legislators Draft "Myls' Law" to Protect our Youth**

(Albany, NY) -State Senator José M. Serrano (D-WF Manhattan/Bronx) and Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (D/WF-Manhattan) introduced Myls' Law (S6506), legislation that will close a dangerous loophole in New York State law.

The recent and tragic death of 4-year-old Myls Dobson highlights a devastating inadequacy in the New York State Child Safety Law, which allowed Myls to be left in an abusive situation that ultimately led to his death. After his father was arrested in an unrelated charge, Myls was left by his father in the custody of Kryzie King, who starved, burned and tortured him for days until Myls ultimately died.

Throughout this process, New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS) was unaware of Myls' situation and unable to intervene since the New York City Police Department (NYPD) was under no requirement to notify ACS that the boy's father was in custody, particularly since the father claimed his son was being looked after. Although many would think that it is the law for the NYPD to contact ACS in these situations, it is unfortunately not the case.

Myls' Law will require the NYPD and police officers across the state to notify local child welfare agencies, like ACS, whenever a person who is the primary caregiver of a child is arrested or taken into custody. Hopefully, this will ensure that children are left under safe and secure supervision by someone qualified to provide this care.

Under the current law, police officers are not mandated to notify local child welfare agencies when a primary caregiver is arrested unless that person has been previously flagged for child abuse. Moreover, no intervention or arrangements are required by police officers unless the child is present at the time of the

arrest.

"The heartbreaking death of little Myls Dobson has shaken our city to its very core. As the father of two young children, it pains me deeply to read the horrific news accounts of the tragic life of this young, innocent child. This legislation will ensure that additional children do not fall through the cracks if their parent or primary caregiver is arrested or taken into custody," **said Senator Serrano**. "What has happened to Myls is an unthinkable tragedy. We must do all that we can to ensure the safety and welfare of our children."

"This tragic situation highlights the desperate need for change in policies regarding child custody," said Assemblymember Rosenthal. "Though the New York City Police Department followed all the rules, a little boy fell through the cracks and we have a duty to ensure that no child dies under these circumstances again. I look forward to working closely with Senator Serrano to see this bill enacted into law."

The Serrano/Rosenthal bill enables local child welfare workers to use their expertise to investigate the safety and welfare of a child when their primary caregiver is taken into custody or arrested, ensures that the child is in a safe environment, and will help prevent another senseless tragedy like that of the death of Myls Dobson.

"It is imperative that we in the legislature act immediately to pass this bill, before another unthinkable tragedy like this occurs. My sincere thanks to Assemblywoman Rosenthal for her partnership on this critical issue," concluded Serrano.