



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Brittany's Law Seeks to Create Registry of Violent Offenders

ROBERT G. ORTT May 18, 2015

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Senator Ortt Co-Sponsors Bill Named for Central New York Girl Murdered in 2009

A bill co-sponsored by State Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I – North Tonawanda) would help protect community members from violent crime and domestic abuse crimes by providing them access to vital information. The New York State Senate today passed “The Domestic Violence Protection Act,” commonly known as “Brittany’s Law,” which would create a public registry of convicted violent felons.

Similar to a sex offender registry, the bill, S513, would establish a violent felony offender registry, allowing the state, local law enforcement to track the whereabouts of offenders on parole, or released from any state or local facility, hospital or institution. The registry would also be accessible to the general public.

“Perhaps the most striking element of tragedies like Brittany's is that they're preventable,” said Sen. Ortt. “New York took the necessary step of creating a sex offender registry to protect our communities. Creating a similar database and registry for violent, repeat offenders is the next logical step to inform and protect our communities. I hope my Assembly Majority colleagues will join the Senate in passing this sensible legislation that will save lives. This is especially pertinent as some liberal, downstate-driven initiatives aim to relax penalties and push offenders from correctional to community settings.”

“The Domestic Violence Protection Act – Brittany’s Law” is named for 12-year-old Brittany Passalacqua of Geneva. Brittany and her mother Helen Buchel, were brutally murdered in November of 2009 by a man who was on parole. According to reports from Geneva Police, John Edward Brown stabbed Brittany and her mother to death at their home following a domestic dispute. Brown was released from prison early, serving only 2 ½ years of a 3-year-sentence for assaulting his infant daughter in 2003.

Brittany’s grandmothers, Dale Driscoll and Joan Tandle, were joined by state Senators in Albany today to call on the Assembly to pass the measure. The Senate has passed the

legislation every year since 2011, but the Democrat-controlled Assembly has refused to bring the bill to the floor for a vote.

“The murder of my daughter and granddaughter devastated our family,” said Driscoll. “If this legislation prevents another family from suffering the loss we have experienced, then my daughter and granddaughter will not have died in vain. People should have the right to know if a person is a violent felon, and I will continue to do everything I can to push this measure in the state Assembly.”

Under the bill, all individuals convicted of a violent felony must register with the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) upon discharge, parole, or release from any state or local facility, hospital or institution. The legislation also establishes annual registration requirements for offenders to allow local law enforcement agencies and the state to monitor the whereabouts of these individuals.

The bill has been sent to the Assembly.