



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo Joins WITH 11-Year-Old Dog Bite Victim Frankie Flora to Call for Passage of His Bill That Would Hold Dog Owners Liable for Vicious Attacks on People or Pets

JOSEPH P. ADDABBO JR June 16, 2015

| ISSUE: **LEGISLATURE**



“Frankie Flora’s Law” Would Require Owners to Pay Medical Bills of Victims

Queens, NY (June 16, 2015): NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. recently joined at a State Capitol press conference with Frankie Flora – an 11-year-old boy who was badly mauled by a pit bull in 2009 – to call for the passage of his legislation (S.2494/A.6210) which would hold dog

owners legally accountable if their animals seriously injure other people or pets. Specifically, owners would be required to pay the medical bills of both human and companion animal victims of dog bites, even if it is a first incident.

Addabbo and other supporters of the legislation praised young Frankie and his mother, Maria Flora, for their work over the last few years to move this legislation forward. Since Frankie was first attacked in 2009, he has undergone more than 30 medical procedures and is facing more in the future. However, his focus now is on advocating for changes in law to help protect other New York residents who are badly injured in vicious dog attacks.

“This legislation will help to promote responsible dog ownership and socialization while ensuring that New Yorkers who are seriously injured by dog bites do not face the added pain of trying to shoulder highly expensive medical bills on their own,” said Addabbo. “In addition, this proposal will also provide some measure of financial assistance for people whose own companion animals are viciously attacked and injured by dangerous dogs. Simply put, dog owners need to be held accountable for the unprovoked actions of their animals, especially when their dog’s behavior ultimately causes grievous harm to others.”

Addabbo noted that an estimated 4.5 million people are bitten by dogs every year, with about one in five victims – or some 800,000 Americans – requiring medical attention. About 27,000 require reconstructive surgery.

Addabbo pointed out that the cost of medical treatment – both in monetary and human terms – has clearly been very high for Frankie Flora and his mother, Maria, and others who have been harmed in dog attacks. “Right now, New York State law does not now hold the owners of vicious dogs liable for the injuries they inflict on people or other animals unless it

can be proven that the dog has a history of dangerous behavior and that the owner is aware of it," he said. "This needs to change."

The "one bite rule" legislation Addabbo is promoting would amend current law by making dog owners liable for the medical bills of attack victims, and would also help to encourage responsible animal ownership and dog socialization efforts. The legislation is not specific to any particular breed of dog, and also seeks to address the high veterinary bills pet owners are also required to pay out of pocket when their animals are needlessly injured by other animals.

In the Senate, the bill is under consideration by the Senate Judiciary Committee. In the Assembly, where the bill is sponsored by Assemblyman Frank Skartados, the legislation is also under review by the Judiciary Committee.

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To learn more about Frankie's efforts, and to view photos of his recovery from the initial attack, please visit www.frankiefund.com

NOTE TO EDITORS AND REPORTERS: If you would like to speak directly with Maria Flora, Frankie's mother, she will be more than happy to oblige and may also be able to have you interview Frankie himself depending on his schedule. Her phone number is 347-672-2354 and her email address is maria@mariaflora.net