



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Senator Young Applauds Signing of Landmark Legislative Package Ensuring Women's Equality

CATHARINE YOUNG October 21, 2015

NEW YORK CITY – Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I- Olean) today joined Governor Andrew Cuomo and members of the Assembly for the signing of a historic package of legislation known as the Women’s Equality Agenda.

The bill package includes legislation written by Senator Young regarding protections for victims of domestic violence. It also ensures equal pay for equal work, reduces sexual harassment in the workplace, ends pregnancy discrimination and toughens human trafficking laws.

“The Women’s Equality Agenda that was signed today establishes sweeping protections for New York’s women, and marks a historic step forward in the fight for equality. It is a reminder that in New York, we believe that no woman should ever be held back or considered secondary on the basis of her gender,” said Senator Young.

“New York State has always been the ‘State of Opportunity,’ and these new laws will ensure that opportunities are protected for women just as much as they are for men. We are also taking fundamental steps forward to protect women from a number of terrible crimes, including sexual harassment and human trafficking,” she said.

The Women’s Equality Agenda includes eight pieces of legislation that address inequalities faced by New York’s women. The plan includes provisions to:

- Ensure equal pay for equal work (S.1);
- Stop sexual harassment in the workplace (S.2);
- Allow for recovery of attorney’s fees in successful sex discrimination cases (S.3).
- Prohibit workplace discrimination because of family status (S.4);
- Protect domestic violence victims from housing discrimination (S.5);
- Allow abuse victims to electronically file orders of protection (S.6);
- Toughen human trafficking laws and protect victims (S.7); and
- End workplace pregnancy discrimination (S.8).

Senate bill 6, which is sponsored by Senator Young, will establish a pilot program to allow victims of domestic violence to file for temporary orders of protection through electronic submission. Currently, temporary orders of protection must be obtained by traveling to the appropriate family court. The new law provides victims with a safer and more accessible avenue for obtaining a temporary order of protection, including through the use of video conferencing technology. In an instance where a victim requires an immediate order, or they

lack the means to travel to the court, orders will now still be able to be issued, thus proving this tremendous security tool without risking further threats or intimidation from an abuser.

“Someone suffering from domestic violence needs to know that protections exist so that they can avail themselves of important safety mechanisms, like orders of protection, without facing further threat or intimidation,” said Senator Young. “This new program will encourage victims to take advantage of this tremendous security tool, so that they can move toward becoming a domestic violence survivor.

“Equal pay in the workplace, strengthening anti-discrimination laws, and providing victims of domestic violence with enhanced protections are issues that I hear about every day from residents across our community. Today represents an important victory, and it’s a victory that I know many people have fought long and hard to achieve.”

“But we cannot rest on our laurels,” she said. “Tomorrow we will fight on because there is still work to do. We are always optimistic for the future. Today is proof that we can come together – Republicans and Democrats – to get the job done. I look forward to continuing this level of partnership to make New York State an even better place to live, work and raise a family.”