



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## ELDER ABUSE AND ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS DAY TAKES CENTERSTAGE IN CAPITOL

SUSAN SERINO June 15, 2016

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ALBANY, NY—Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park) put the spotlight on some of our state's most vulnerable seniors today in Albany by sponsoring a resolution designating June 15, 2016 as 'World Elder Abuse Awareness Day,' the month of June as Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month, and announcing the final passage of her bill that would raise public awareness to prevent elder abuse.

*“The thought of anyone taking advantage of our seniors—the people who have spent their lives building and shaping the communities that we know and love—is hard to fathom. But the fact is, it happens all the time and all too often it happens at the hands of the people our seniors know and trust the most,” said Senator Serino, who Chairs the Senate’s Committee on Aging. “World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is about bringing this pervasive issue out of the shadows so that community members can play an active role in helping to ensure the health and safety of our seniors.”*

The resolution notes that nearly five million cases of elder abuse occur each year in the United States, however researchers estimate that up to 85% of these incidents go unreported, with financial abuse alone costs older Americans almost \$3 billion each year.

Senator Serino’s bill (S. 6923) would authorize the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) to conduct a public awareness campaign in order to stem cases of elder abuse and increase reporting. The bill is sponsored in the Assembly by the Assembly’s Aging Chair, Steven Cymbrowitz and has now been sent to the Governor.

Serino also announced that her bill (S. 7194) to allow NYSOFA to conduct background checks on its employees and volunteers passed in the Senate.

*“The State Office for the Aging conducts a series of great programs around the state for the benefit of our seniors,” continued Serino. “However, it is critical that the agency be able to add an extra layer of protection to ensure that the seniors they are trying to assist aren’t inadvertently exposed to volunteers or employees with criminal pasts that could put already vulnerable seniors in jeopardy. This bill would allow them to take that extra step in ensuring the health and safety of New York’s seniors.”*

Further, Senator Serino also sponsored a resolution that passed in the Senate that designates the month of June as ‘Alzheimer’s and Brain Awareness Month.’

*“Both of today’s resolutions are inherently linked as those suffering from Alzheimer’s and dementia are especially vulnerable to abuse,” Serino continued.*

On the floor of the Senate, Senator Serino cited the Alzheimer’s Association who notes that every 66 seconds, someone in the United States develops Alzheimer’s Disease, a truly

debilitating illness that slowly robs patients of their most valuable possession—their memory.

Currently, there is no robust treatment or cure for Alzheimer's and it is ultimately fatal. As noted in the resolution, Alzheimer's and dementia claim the lives of nearly one in every three seniors each and every year.

*“Take a minute to imagine waking up and not recognizing the faces of the people you love the most—not knowing your children, your spouse, your best friend,” said Serino on the floor of the Senate.*

*“Devastating is an understatement. Alzheimer's is a diagnosis that effects, not only the patients, but an entire family, changing life as they knew it forever. This month is about shining light on the Disease and showing support for those battling this diagnosis and their families.”*

Serino also noted that the legislature has recently made an unprecedented strides in combating the debilitating disease having dedicated over \$25 million to the cause in last year's state budget.

As the Chair of the Senate's Aging Committee, Senator Sue Serino has made standing up against elder abuse and for our most vulnerable seniors one of her highest priorities, introducing innovative legislation to tackle the issue head on, securing critical funding in the NYS State Budget to expand the use of successful multi-disciplinary teams, and bringing key stakeholders together to ensure the continuance of the conversation on elder abuse. On Friday, June 11, 2016 she was honored by the Coalition on Elder Abuse of Dutchess County with the 'Champion for Elder Rights and Safety Award' in recognition of her efforts.