



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Sen. Valesky Introduces Legislation to Require Life Saving Equipment on Piers and Docks Throughout State Canal System

DAVID J. VALESKY August 11, 2016

Aug. 11, 2016 - Sen. David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) today introduced “Aaron’s Law,” legislation that would require ring life buoys be installed on every pier, wharf, lock, and dock in the New York State Canal System. Currently, no such lifesaving equipment or flotation devices are available in case of an emergency.

Aaron Teater, 23, drowned at Sylvan Beach on May 2. He had been fishing with his mother, Nancy, from the pier in the Erie Canal where it connects with Oneida Lake at Sylvan Beach. When his tackle box, filled with heirloom lures given to him by his deceased grandfather, fell into the canal Teater dove in to retrieve the box. Icy cold water and a strong undercurrent pulled Teater away from the pier. Although he tried to swim to a spot on the pier where he could hoist himself up, he struggled against the current. With no rope and no life saving devices available, Nancy watched her son drown in the canal.

“A simple life ring would have saved Aaron Teater’s life that afternoon. Instead, a mother and a sister lost a precious family member because no safety equipment had been installed,” Sen. Valesky said. “Another tragedy is easy to prevent. No other family should experience the loss that the Teater family has endured.”

“My mother and I are very grateful to Senator Valesky for listening to our pleas, as well as those from the community in introducing this bill. It is our sincere hope that the Senate will approve this legislation so that another family can be spared the tragedy that we have lived through, and Aaron will rest peacefully with the knowledge that his death helped save the lives of others enjoying the beautiful waters provided to us by New York State,” Starlette Teater, Aaron’s sister, said.

The bill would require the Canal Corporation to install one ring life buoy on each side of a pier, wharf, lock, and dock, as well as one near each external stairway leading to water. Each life ring would have at least 100 feet of line.

The bill will be sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblyman Bill Magee (D-Nelson).