



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

## Senator Murphy, Assemblywoman Paulin And Pace Students Collaborate To Save Performing Elephants From Abuse

TERRENCE MURPHY February 17, 2017

| ISSUE: **ANIMAL WELFARE, AMY PAULIN, PACE UNIVERSITY, ZOOS BOTANICAL GARDENS AND ACQUIARIUMS**



PLEASANTVILLE, NY – Many of us went to the circus as kids or have taken our families there as adults, never realizing how much the elephants were suffering for our amusement. But the students at Pace University’s Dyson College of Arts & Sciences Environmental Policy Clinic recognized the injustice, and banded together to act. Working with Senator Terrence Murphy, Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, Pace faculty members John Cronin and Michelle

Land, the students created the Elephant Protection Act.

Senator Murphy sponsored S7805, the Elephant Protection Act, which bans the use of entertainment elephants in circuses and other venues in New York State. Through his diligence, the Senate voted 62-0 to pass the Elephant Protection Act last year. The only exemptions to the Act include zoos, aquariums, wildlife sanctuaries and non-profit environmental education programs. Additionally, a \$10,000 per violation penalty will be imposed for entertainment acts not in compliance.

“Circus Elephants spend a significant portion of their lives inside trucks, trains or trailers, enduring additional physical restrictions and social isolation,” Senator Murphy said. “These elephants live in conditions that are in stark contrast to their natural habitat, including living on an unnatural diet, restricted movement, inappropriate housing and a hostile climate. This is inhumane and has to stop. As a lover of animals, I believe it is our duty to protect them.”

Assemblywoman Amy Paulin has championed the bill in the Assembly. “Performance elephants have been exploited and abused for far too long. We can no longer ignore the cruelty that they have endured for our amusement – confinement, torture and unhealthy living conditions have led to early death for these intelligent, gentle animals. I want to thank Senator Murphy for taking the lead in the Senate to get this bill passed. I will work with my colleagues to pass it in the Assembly this year.”

“The list of circuses and other entertainment venues that abused elephants and are now closing because of it is growing,” noted Michelle Land, Director of Pace University Dyson College of Arts & Sciences Environmental Policy Clinic. “Times have changed. It is no longer acceptable to disregard the suffering of animals being kept in captivity.”

David Paulstitch spoke on behalf of students. "A tamed elephant is a tortured elephant. Performing elephants are chained up to 22 hours a day and are trained with cruel techniques that involve the use of objects to control and punish, such as bull hooks, electric shocks, whips, metal bars, and chains. Abusing elephants for entertainment is part of a bygone era. No one with a heart would willfully hurt an elephant."

The ground swell of support this legislation has received has had a ripple effect. Even before the bill was passed in the Senate, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus announced they would retire their elephants to the company's 200-acre Center for Elephant Conservation in central Florida by 2018. Public pressure forced the Circus to move the date up to May 2016.