



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

Tedisco, Boyle, Serino, Rosenthal & Murray Hold 7th Annual NYS Animal Advocacy Day to Call for “Kirby & Quigley’s Law,” and Other Laws to Protect Pets & People

SUSAN SERINO June 6, 2017

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Senator Jim Tedisco (R,C,I,REF-Glenville), Senator Phil Boyle (R,C,I-Bay Shore), Senator Sue Serino (R,C,I-Hyde Park), Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (D,WF-Manhattan) and Assemblymember Dean Murray (R,C,I-East Patchogue) today joined with their legislative colleagues, law enforcement and hundreds of pet owners and animal advocates to hold the 7th Annual **NYS Animal Advocacy Day** at an event in Albany emceed by Steve Caporizzo from Pet

Connection.

“It’s hard to read a newspaper, watch the news or go on social media and not learn of yet another disturbing case of animal cruelty and neglect. While we’ve made great strides in protecting our four-legged friends since the passage of the landmark Buster’s Law in 1999, there are still many miles to go in New York State to protect our pets and keep people safe. Animal cruelty is a bridge crime on the FBI criminal profile and those who are so dastardly as to harm our pets can and often do go on to hurt humans. *Animal Advocacy Day matters because it’s about more than just protecting our four-legged friends, it’s about keeping people safe. Just as important as strengthening our laws, Animal Advocacy Day aims to educate the public and law enforcement about the value of our companion animals and the importance of enforcing existing laws,*” said Senator Tedisco, Senate Co-Chair of Animal Advocacy Day.

“Animal Advocacy Day is a wonderful annual event that brings the Legislature, law enforcement, and hundreds of pet owners and advocates together to raise awareness of important animal issues. Now more than ever, we are passing and enacting vitally important laws to protect our pets and hold those who are cruel to animals accountable to the highest extent of the law. We have accomplished so much in our fight to enhance animal safety and protections, and we will never stop working to create meaningful legislation that serves as a voice for the voiceless,” said Senator Boyle, Co-Chair of Animal Advocacy Day.

“For many New Yorkers, our pets are an extension of our families and as such, we have a responsibility to ensure that their health and safety remain a priority. Animal Advocacy Day is about giving voice to the needs of New York’s animals and ensuring that those who seek to exploit their vulnerability know that they will not be let off easily here in our state. I am proud to join with my legislative colleagues to take a stand for the companion animals that give so much to so many of our families,” said Senator Serino, Co-Chair of Animal Advocacy Day.

“Animal Advocacy Day is a day for New Yorkers to come together and speak up for our state’s most vulnerable population,” said Assemblymember Rosenthal, Assembly Co-Chair of the day’s events. “On this day in particular, as well as every other one, it is essential that we speak up for animals and be their voice at the table. New York State has made great strides on a wide range of animal welfare issues, but there is much more to do, and we are ready for that challenge.”

“Animal Advocacy Day is the day that we give voice to those who can't speak for themselves, as animal advocates from all over the state have the opportunity to converge on the Capitol to push for legislation to protect and care for our animal friends. I'm honored to join with my colleagues to help make this day and this effort possible,” said Assemblyman Murray, Assembly Co-Chair.

Several bi-partisan public safety measures are on the agenda including pushing the state Assembly to bring to the Floor for a debate and up or down vote “Kirby & Quigley’s Law” ([S.1680/A.3038](#)) which would make it a Buster’s Law felony punishable with 2 years in jail and a \$5,000 fine for harming a companion animal during the commission of another felony. “Kirby & Quigley’s Law” was named for two Montgomery County dogs that were shot and killed during a burglary last winter that is still an unsolved case. The State Senate voted across party lines to pass “Kirby & Quigley’s Law” five times, most recently in January by a 58-2 vote. It is currently in the Assembly Codes Committee. **The bill has 81 sponsors in the Assembly (76 votes are needed to pass the bill on the Floor of the Assembly).**

Special guests included Denise Krohn, who has been at the state Capitol nearly every day this session lobbying for passage of “Kirby and Quigley’s Law.” Also speaking was Joni Bonilla of Operation At-Ease in Rotterdam, which matches rescue dogs with wounded warriors. Nathaniel Fields, CEO of Urban Resource Institute in New York City, discussed the link between domestic violence and animal cruelty and highlighted his unique emergency

housing which accepts people with pets. Rensselaer County District Attorney Joel Abelow, who prosecuted one of the first Buster's animal cruelty felony law cases in the state, Saratoga County Sheriff Michael Zurlo and his K-9 units, Richard Nash who adopted Hudson, one of the Railroad Puppies that was nailed to railroad tracks in Albany, Bocker the Labradoodle Junior, Fritz the miniature horse also participated.

This bipartisan event enabled attendees to network, share information and lobby their legislators to raise awareness of the need to protect pets and people from abuse by addressing the bridge crime nature of animal cruelty. Over 50 exhibitors including rescues, shelters, and animal advocacy groups took part.

According to the ASPCA, 62 percent of American households have a pet. Studies have shown companion animals can provide a variety of positive health benefits, including providing comfort and assistance to seniors and people with disabilities. They help police, fire departments, and search and rescue efforts to keep citizens safe. It was widely reported that a military canine went in with U.S. Navy Seal Team 6 when they took down the world's most notorious terrorist, Osama Bin Laden.

Buster's Law created the felony category of "aggravated cruelty to animals," punishable by up to two years in prison and a \$5,000 fine. The law was named after an 18-month-old tabby cat that had been doused with kerosene and burned to death by a Schenectady teen. Prior to this bill becoming law, animal cruelty resulted in only misdemeanor penalties, if any charges were imposed at all.

Since the 1997 arrest that inspired the creation of Buster's Law, the perpetrator who abused that helpless cat has been imprisoned for various crimes, including attempted rape, sexual abuse and unlawful imprisonment of a 12-year-old girl.

For more information on NYS Animal Advocacy Day, visit the event's page on [Facebook](#).

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