



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

## Bill to save performing elephants passes both houses of Legislature

TERRENCE MURPHY June 7, 2017

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Pleasantville, NY - It has been said that an elephant never forgets. If that is truly the case, there are thousands, perhaps millions of entertainment elephants that will never forget the cruel treatment they received at the hands of mankind. Senator Terrence Murphy, Assemblywoman Amy Paulin and a dedicated group of Pace University students led by faculty members John Cronin and Michelle Land have never forgotten, and for the past year they have sought to end the mistreatment of elephants used in entertainment venues. To protect performing pachyderms, Senator Murphy sponsored the "Elephant Protection Act"

(2098B) which prohibits the use of elephants in circuses and other entertainment venues in New York State.

The historic bill was passed by the Senate on May 23rd by a unanimous vote of 62-0. The Assembly version of the bill, A464B, sponsored by Assemblywoman Paulin, was passed on June 6th by a vote of 56-6, and is now set to be delivered to Governor Cuomo.

Senator Terrence Murphy said, "It is a fact that elephants used for entertainment purposes suffer irreparable physical and psychological harm that shortens their lifespans. They spend a significant portion of their lives crammed inside trucks, trains or trailers, and then they are poked, prodded or shocked into performing tricks. Thankfully, we have come to our senses as a society and we no longer tolerate the abuse of performing elephants. We have taken a bold step as the first state to outlaw elephants having to suffer for our amusement. Let us hope it starts a national and international trend."

"Performance elephants have been exploited and abused for too long," said Assemblywoman Paulin. "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."

"Elephants are a treasured species, and there is growing popular support for their protection," said Brian Shapiro, New York State Director for The Humane Society of the United States. "We applaud Senator Murphy and Assemblymember Paulin for their leadership, and respectfully urge Governor Cuomo to sign this historic bill into law."

"A performing elephant is a tortured elephant," said Michelle Land, Pace University clinical

professor of environmental law and policy. "Given the global controversy about elephants in the wild, New York State has a duty to end these practices that foster false values and misinformation about the species. We believe New York's leadership will embolden other states to prohibit performing elephants, and put an end to this barbaric relic of a bygone era."

The Elephant Protection Act safeguards all elephants from the physical and psychological harm inflicted upon them by living conditions, treatment, and cruel methods that are necessary to train elephants to perform in entertainment acts. The only exemptions to the Act include zoos, aquariums, wildlife sanctuaries and non-profit environmental education programs.

The Elephant Protection Act was inspired by the students at Pace University's Dyson College of Arts & Sciences Environmental Policy Clinic, who recognized the injustice being perpetrated against circus elephants and vowed to act. Working in conjunction with Senator Murphy, Assemblywoman Paulin, and Pace faculty members John Cronin and Michelle Land, the students crafted the Elephant Protection Act.

News of the student's passionate efforts shook the entertainment world. No doubt thanks to the concerted work of legislators, Pace faculty members and students, circuses began to feel the weight of public opinion shifting against them. In response, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey circus, one of the main culprits in the mistreatment of elephants, ended 146 years of performances with a final show at New York's Nassau Coliseum on May 21, 2017 just prior to of the Elephant Protection Bill being passed by the Senate.