



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Standing Up Against Domestic Violence Beyond October

PATTY RITCHIE October 27, 2017



October marks Domestic Violence Awareness month. It's an important time for people to use whatever platform they can to talk about these tragic encounters, raise awareness of them and perhaps share personal stories or experiences. However, as we flip the calendar to November, stopping the spread of domestic violence—which is one of the least reported and punished crimes—and helping victims recover should continue to remain at the forefront of our minds.

According to recent statistics, 400,000 domestic incidents are reported to police agencies throughout New York State annually. In addition, one in three women and one in four men in the United States have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner.

However, what statistics cannot calculate is the countless number of people suffering both physically and psychologically because of domestic violence, but for whatever reason cannot or have not come forward. It is extremely difficult for those suffering this violence to seek help, but it is critical to make sure everyone knows help is there. We have a number of amazing agencies in Central and Northern New York that provide victims with the options, support and recovery they so desperately need.

In order to make sure these agencies can continue the important work they do, we must provide the support that allows them to offer the assistance and programs to those who need it. That is why I fought to secure \$80,000 in special funding this year for agencies in Oswego, Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties. This funding will help victims of domestic violence—victims who can be neighbors, friends or even family.

In addition, I am also proud to cosponsor legislation, known as 'Brittany's Law' (S.65), that has passed the Senate and would create a public registry of those convicted of domestic violence. Under the measure, domestic abuse offenders would be required to register with the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) upon their release from prison. The registry—which would be similar to the state's sexual offender registry—would be available to the public. In addition, the measure also establishes annual registration requirements for offenders.

Stopping domestic violence requires a partnership with everyone who is committed to the safety of themselves and their neighbors. Sharing the New York State Domestic and Sexual

Violence Hotline number—**1-800-942-6906**—with anyone you think might need to break free from a dangerous situation is a great way to start. On a typical day, domestic violence hotlines nationwide receive 21,000 calls. That is an average of nearly 15 calls per minute.

During Domestic Violence Awareness Month—and year round—we need to make it a priority to raise awareness of how we can protect victims, and help them to rebound from dangerous situations. For more information on how you can do so and to access additional resources for victims, visit www.opdv.ny.gov/index.html.