



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Senate Passes Brittany's Law for Eighth Consecutive Year

CATHARINE YOUNG June 13, 2018

| ISSUE: **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, PUBLIC PROTECTION, CRIMINAL JUSTICE**



Albany, New York – On what would have been the birthday of domestic violence murder victim Helen Buchel of Geneva, New York, the State Senate passed Brittany's Law, a public safety measure sponsored by Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-57th District) that would create a tracking system and public registry of domestic violence offenders.

“The passage of Brittany's Law today - on what would have been Helen Buchel's 43rd birthday - is a painful reminder that her life and that of her beautiful 12-year-old daughter Brittany Passalacqua were brutally cut short by a man with a history of domestic violence,”

said Senator Young. “A devastating loss for their family, it was one that could have been prevented if Helen had known the past of the man she was dating. That is why I introduced this legislation and will continue to fight for it until it becomes law.”

The legislation was created in response to the ruthless 2009 murder of Brittany Passalacqua, and her mother, Helen Buchel, of Geneva, New York. The perpetrator, John Edward Brown, was a violent felon who had been released early from prison after serving only 2 ½ years of his sentence for assaulting his infant daughter in 2003. Unaware of his dangerous past, Helen started dating Brown, who had only been on parole for a few months before he murdered her and her daughter.

“It is incomprehensible as to why the Assembly continues to block this measure that would save lives. Countless other victims have been lost to domestic violence in the eight years since Brittany’s Law was first passed in the Senate. We will never know how many might have been saved if the protections in this bill were available. But we do know that if we act now, we can save innocent lives in the future.”

Brittany’s Law requires convicted domestic violence offenders to register with the state Division of Criminal Justice Services upon parole or release from incarceration, hospitalization or institutionalization. The information would then be disseminated to the public via registry similar to the one used for sexual offenders under Megan’s Law.

“There is a high rate of recidivism for individuals who commit domestic violence making it important that the public have this information. So many times I’ve heard victims say that if they had only known about their abusers’ previous offenses, they never would have entered into those destructive relationships,” said Senator Young. “It is too late for Brittany and Helen, but enacting this bill into law would be the best way to honor their memory and spare other families from similar tragedies.”