



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## PUSH FOR JUSTICE LEADS TO NEW ASSEMBLY SPONSOR FOR WONDERLY BILL

SUSAN SERINO September 4, 2018

| ISSUE: **LET THE PUNISHMENT FIT THE CRIME, CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, PUBLIC PROTECTION, CONSECUTIVE SENTENCING**

# JOIN OUR FIGHT FOR JUSTICE



ALBANY, NY—On August 1, 2018, six years after Shawn and Patricia Wonderly were tragically killed when their family vehicle was struck by a felon fleeing from police, Senator Sue Serino and Assemblyman Kieran Lalor came together with local law enforcement and family members to continue their ongoing fight for justice. The lawmakers urged a member of the Assembly Majority Conference to pick up the fight where late-Assemblyman Frank

Skartados had left off. Today, the lawmakers joined forces again to announce that their push has successfully led to a new Assembly bill sponsor being secured—Assemblywoman Sandy Galef.

**Senator Serino said,** *“Assemblywoman Sandy Galef has proven time and again to be an effective partner in passing legislation that puts victims first and bolsters public safety. She has a proven track record of negotiating bills that have historically stalled in the Assembly, and I am encouraged that she has taken on this critically important challenge to pass legislation to let the punishment fit the crime in cases like the Wonderlys’. Together, with Assemblyman Kieran Lalor, we will continue to make this bill a priority to ensure that no other New York family experiences the injustice that the Wonderlys have.”*

*“I applaud my colleague Assembly Member Sandy Galef for supporting New York State Senate’s consecutive sentencing bill in order to ‘Let the Punishment Fit the Crime.’ Her introduction of the bill as a well-regarded member of the Assembly majority is a necessary and critical step toward passing this important piece of common-sense legislation. I look forward to working with Assembly Member Galef and members of both parties on this important bill,”* **said Assemblyman Kieran Michael Lalor, 105th Assembly District.**

**Assemblywoman Galef said,** *“Consecutive sentencing makes it so that those convicted of killing multiple people in one act face a sentence that is truer to the suffering they have caused. This bill will allow judges to give those guilty of certain homicide related offenses against more than one person a sentence that is in keeping with the horrifying crimes they commit. What happened to the Wonderly family is tragic. This bill, which ‘Lets the Punishment Fit the Crime,’ gives families similarly affected the justice they deserve.”*

During the trial, the Wonderlys’ killer pleaded guilty to two counts of second-degree manslaughter and received two, 6 ½ to 13 year sentences. However, under current law in New York, the killer must serve those sentences concurrently, effectively robbing one lost life of the justice they deserve. The perpetrator—the man responsible for orphaning their two children—could be released on parole as soon as next year.

For years, Senator Sue Serino, Assemblymen Frank Skartados and Kieran Lalor have actively fought for the passage of legislation that would ensure justice is served in cases like this, and their legislation has come to be known as the “Let the Punishment Fit the Crime” bill (S. 2159).

Each year, the bill passes in the Senate with as little as only one 'no' votes, but year after year, it fails to even make it out of the Assembly Codes Committee.

Back in April, our community lost a fierce champion for this legislation when Assemblyman Frank Skartados passed unexpectedly from advanced stage pancreatic cancer. A push by Lalor and Serino to find a new sponsor in the Assembly Majority—a necessary step to ensure the bill's passage—yielded no results.

Senator Serino subsequently introduced a more narrowly tailored version of the bill in an effort to begin any negotiation with the State Assembly. The new bill (S. 8540) would grant judges the discretion to authorize the charge of multiple homicide and related offenses to be served consecutively when they result from a single criminal act in circumstances when the perpetrator was on probation or parole—as was the case here.

The recent press conference was held in observance of the anniversary of the Wonderlys' passing and attendees urged a member of the Assembly Majority Conference to come forward and support the bill. In the days following the event, a memo was circulated to every member of that conference in an effort to find a bill sponsor. Upon receiving the memo, Assemblywoman Galef reached out immediately and agreed to take up the fight for justice. Assemblywoman Galef has agree to introduce S. 8540 in the State Assembly in the coming legislative session.

*Patricia's brother and longtime advocate for this bill, Richard DeSantola said, "On behalf of the Wonderly children, I'd like to express our thanks to Assemblywoman Galef for agreeing to sponsor our legislation to ensure that the punishment truly fits the crime when multiple lives are taken in a single act. We call on other members of the majority party to join Assemblywoman Galef in co-sponsoring this bill in January so no other family has to endure the pain we have."*

Senator Sue Serino and Assemblyman Kieran Lalor have launched a petition in support of the effort to get this bill passed. Residents of the community who wish to sign the petition

can do so by [clicking here](#).