



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

## Carlucci, Galef, and Domestic Violence Advocates Announce New Law In Effect to Help NYS Court System

SENATOR DAVID CARLUCCI January 10, 2020

| ISSUE: **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, MENTAL HEALTH, VETERANS, YOUTH OFFENDERS, COURT SYSTEM**



(Ossining, NY) - Senator David Carlucci (D-Rockland/Westchester), Assemblywoman Sandy Galef (D-Westchester/Putnam), My Sisters' Place Inc., Center For Safety & Change, and advocates against domestic violence gathered at the Ossining Village Court to announce a new law that expands the use of specialty problem-solving courts, which will have a direct impact on victims and survivors of domestic violence.

Problem-solving courts are specialty courts that have a dedicated judge, along with court staff, who are trained on issues unique to that court type. New York State's Unified Court System has 42 integrated domestic violence courts, 141 drug courts, 31 veterans courts, 29 mental health courts, and courts that handle youth offenders, child welfare and substance abuse, sex offenses, and human trafficking.

Under the new law passed by Carlucci and Galef, counties can create and expand problem solving courts and cases can be transferred from village, town, and city courts to problem solving courts.

**Senator David Carlucci said,** "Domestic Violence courts concentrate on victim safety and offender accountability. Westchester and Rockland Counties have Integrated Domestic Violence Courts, and now villages, towns, and cities in these counties can actually utilize them. With this new law, our domestic violence courts across the State can now help countless more victims and survivors by ensuring that they have an easier time navigating the legal system and providing them with the wrap around services to support their family."

**Assemblywoman Sandy Galef said,** "Prior to this legislation, problem solving courts were being underutilized because towns and villages could not transfer court cases that may be better served by specialty courts with staff trained to deal with mental health issues, domestic violence, veterans' issues, etc. This law serves a twofold goal of reducing costs by more effectively using the resources available to us, while also providing a more holistic and restorative approach to criminal justice."

Domestic Violence courts are effective because they bring cases before one judge, they take into account family issues to help in the decision-making process, and they concentrate on making resources and services available to help families.

**Rockland County Family Court Judge Sherri Eisenpress said,** “I am pleased that the New York State Legislature has passed, and the Governor has signed the new law, which will expand the use of problem-solving courts and, in particular, permit counties, with the consent of court administrators, to create domestic violence “hub” courts. These courts will greatly aid in the administration of justice and promote convenience and efficiency for all parties so as to avoid the need for and costs connected with appearances by all parties in multiple courts to address related matters.”

**Domestic Violence Survivor, Vanessa Pahucki said,** “I was fortunate enough to have my case heard in Rockland County's Integrated Domestic Violence, problem solving court. Having one judge oversee and rule on all aspects of the case, family and criminal matters, ensured justice and safety for my son and I. Senator Carlucci and Assemblywoman Galef have shown a steadfast commitment to survivors of domestic violence through this legislation. The enactment of the bill will afford all victims the same opportunity that I was privileged enough to have, which will make it easier for victims to rebuild their lives.”

**Executive Director of Center for Safety & Change, Elizabeth Santiago said,** “We are very pleased this legislation was signed into law by the Governor. We thank Senator Carlucci and Assemblywoman Galef for getting this done. We hope this will make victims feel that their abusers are being held accountable, and we are hoping to see a reduction in repeat offenders because there is one judge holding them accountable.”

**Managing Attorney Immigration Practice, Silvia Lederman with My Sisters' Place Inc. said,** “This legislation is a victory for survivors of Domestic Violence who can now benefit from the One Judge – One Family concept of judicial intervention practiced in the Integrated Domestic Violence Courts of Westchester County. One judge who understands the dynamics of domestic violence as well as the totality of the impact of domestic violence has on survivors as well as children and other family members. The Integrated Domestic Violence Court is

uniquely designed to serve a variety of important functions including consolidation of judicial remedies, insuring the safety of survivors and their children as well as referral services to social services agencies like My Sisters' Place that provide crucial legal and counseling support to survivors of domestic violence. We applaud New York State Senator David Carlucci and New York State Assemblywoman Sandy Galef for their leadership and recognizing the specific legal challenges that domestic violence survivors face.”

**Rockland County Advocate Phyllis Frank said,** “In the world of domestic violence there couldn’t be a better piece of legislation than this one that allows hub courts, problem solving courts, particularly on the issue of domestic violence. It will clearly enhance safety for women who are abused, and it will increase the ability to hold domestic violence offenders accountable in the most effective and appropriate way. We are grateful to the legislature and the Governor for making this happen.”

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2019-S3889**

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate

- ○ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ○ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Relates to the removal of an action from a problem solving court

February 20, 2019

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **David Carlucci**

Do you support this bill?