



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## SERINO BILL TO BETTER PROTECT CHILDREN FROM ABUSE PASSES IN COMMITTEE

SUSAN SERINO May 10, 2022

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ALBANY, NY—In 2016, the conviction of a county legislator who used his position with a local children’s organization to sexually abuse two boys exposed a loophole in New York State law and propelled State Senator Sue Serino to introduce legislation to better protect children from this kind of abuse. The Senator announced today that the bill has passed in the Senate’s Children and Families Committee.

Under current New York State law, mandated reporters—those who are legally required to report observed or suspected abuse—are only required to do so if it happens at the hands of those with familial relationships to the child. If the abuse is perpetrated by someone close to the child, but outside of the family, there is no law requiring that the abuse be reported.

Senator Serino's bill (S. 2824/A. 7015) would change that by expressly requiring that any person 18 years of age or older working directly with children—whether the position is paid or volunteer—be required to report any suspected abuse directly to law enforcement.

*“When it comes to protecting our children, we have a duty to ensure that our laws are rock solid,” said Senator Sue Serino. “This horrific case has shown us that we must do more to put an end to abuse and send a clear message to would-be perpetrators that we have zero tolerance for such heinous acts. I urge my colleagues in the legislature to set politics aside, do the right thing, and join our push to advance this critical piece of legislation.”*

In 2018, thanks in large part to the fearless advocacy of the families who were involved with the case, Senator Serino's bill passed unanimously in the State Senate. However, despite the efforts of the bill's sponsor in that house, the State Assembly refused to take the bill up for a vote in that Chamber.

Last week, as reported by the Mid Hudson News, the convicted perpetrator was released from prison after serving his sentence for first-degree sexual abuse and first-degree attempted sexual abuse—both felonies—as well as forcible touching and two counts of endangering the welfare of a child. The release highlights the continued need for the implementation of this measure.

The bill was brought before the Senate's Children and Families Committee in response to a procedural motion for committee consideration filed by Senator Serino and has now been sent to the Codes Committee in the Senate. Assemblywoman Sandy Galef sponsors the bill in the Assembly.

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