



STATE OF NEW YORK | EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
DAVID A. PATERSON | GOVERNOR

For Immediate Release: April 27, 2009

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GOVERNOR PATERSON ANNOUNCES LEGISLATION TO STRENGTHEN PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Bill Would Enact Anti-Discrimination Provisions in Employment and Housing for Victims of Domestic Violence

Governor David A. Paterson today announced legislation designed to enhance protection for victims of domestic violence, strengthen the court system's response to families affected by domestic violence, and hold abusers accountable for their actions. The bill, which was submitted to the legislature today, significantly improves the State's ability to combat the harmful effects of domestic violence on its victims, children and our communities.

"Domestic violence is a crime of enormous magnitude that affects all New Yorkers – regardless of age, race, or economic status – with long-term and pervasive consequences for victims, families, communities and society. New York has a responsibility to keep our citizens free from the harmful and devastating consequences of domestic violence," said Governor Paterson. "This bill will support our efforts in the prevention of domestic violence and ensure that we are doing all that we can to protect the victims of domestic violence. It will give law enforcement and our courts the tools they need to keep our communities safe. Protecting victims from discrimination in housing and employment helps give domestic violence victims the stability they need to break free from the cycle of abuse."

Each year, an estimated 400,000 domestic incidents are reported to law enforcement in New York and approximately 300,000 calls are received by hotlines throughout the State. Nearly 165,000 orders of protection were issued in domestic violence cases in family, criminal and supreme courts in 2007 alone.

This bill sets forth a multi-faceted approach to addressing these concerns. Among other things, the bill:

- prohibits discrimination against victims of domestic violence in employment and housing;
- requires education and training on the effects of domestic violence for court-appointed attorneys for children;
- requires courts, when making determinations of visitation or custody, to state on the record their decision-making factors in established incidents of domestic violence and child;
- allows victims of sexual assault by family or intimates obtain orders of protection in family court;
- provides for transmission of domestic violence incident reports involving probationers or parolees to the relevant supervising agency as soon as practicable; and
- provides a protective structure for localities to establish domestic violence fatality review teams.

Executive Director of the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence Amy Barasch said: “This inclusive bill offers a strong package of responses to domestic violence that will provide both protection and prevention. I applaud the Governor for once again reinforcing his commitment to this issue and promoting New York’s position as a leader in the fight against domestic violence.”

Executive Director of The Legal Project Lisa A. Frisch said: “This comprehensive bill would provide vital increased protections for victims of domestic violence and stalking, including protections from housing and employment discrimination, and I commend the Governor for recognizing the critical importance of providing assistance to victims in so many diverse areas affecting their lives.”

CEO of the New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence Jessica Vasquez said: “The New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence thanks Governor Paterson for his leadership on prioritizing the diverse needs of survivors of domestic violence. Survivors of domestic violence encounter barriers on many fronts. We applaud the Governor’s efforts to strengthen New York State’s response to domestic violence.”

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