

Continuing Progress in My Fight to Get Justice for Child Sexual Abuse Victims in New York and Stop Predators from Abusing New Generations of Children

May 29, 2012

I held a series of informational events in Albany earlier this year to bring the attention of Governor Cuomo and my colleagues in the Legislature to the wide-ranging problem of child sexual abuse in society.

We looked at the recent revelations in the world of sports and learned about abuse in schools and institutions. We heard one of the state's leading prosecutors speak about how current statutes of limitations in New York State need to be changed in order to bring justice to victims.

A panel of legal experts spoke about the change that is taking place across the nation where other states are facing up to the challenge of providing justice and punishing perpetrators and those who hide them. My Child Victims Act of New York seeks to update our laws regarding this crime.

Our New York State statutes of limitations are so lax that many perpetrators evade exposure by waiting out the short statute of limitations. I want to change that because pedophiles who are not exposed will continue to abuse yet more children in the future. You can help by signing the online petition at www.nychildvictimsact.org



LEGAL ROUNDTABLE - At a roundtable in May co-sponsored by Albany Law School and Benjamin Cardozo Law School, Albany legislators and others had the opportunity to hear about movements across the county that are seeking to change outmoded statutes of limitations for child sexual abuse. The panel was moderated by Albany Law Professor Melissa Breger and one of the speakers was attorney Carmen L. Durso, who is spearheading changes in Massachusetts law (both standing with me). Shannon Sarfoh, Albany County Assistant District Attorney and Special Victims Unit Bureau Chief; (seated left) spoke about the difficulties faced by her office when victims come forward with charges against abusers. Professor Marci Hamilton from Yeshiva University's Cardozo Law School, spoke about the recent enactment of the Child Victims Act in Hawaii and the outcome of successful enactment of legislation similar to my bill in California and Delaware. We also heard about ongoing efforts in Pennsylvania and New Jersey to make laws more favorable to victims of abuse.



DECLARE AWARENESS MONTH - The New York State Assembly adopted a resolution to declare the month of March 2012 as Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Month in New York State and I presented the resolution to a group of advocates in Albany. They included, from left, Mark Meyer Appel, who heads the Jewish advocacy group Voice of Justice, and Robert Kristan and Dr. William Benison of the New York Coalition to Protect Children. The resolution was presented to Governor Andrew Cuomo on February 29 and said, in part: "By calling attention to the serious and significant problem of child sexual abuse, the observation of Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Month exemplifies a worthy commitment to the children of New York State, encourages improvement in the quality and availability of pertinent programs, laws and services, and provides an opportunity to increase awareness about all aspects of this important matter."



ABUSE IN SPORTS - Bobby Davis (speaking) and his cousin Mike Lang are among the most recent to bring charges of child sexual abuse against figures in collegiate sports. They and their attorney, Gloria Allred (far left) were among the speakers at an Albany press conference and told about their case against a Syracuse University coach. Attorney Kevin Mulhearn (left) spoke about their long-running effort to get legal justice in a case involving a coach at Poly Prep Day School in New York City. Another speaker was filmmaker Christopher Gavagan, who is producing a documentary, "Coached Into Silence," about abuse he and others suffered as children at the hands of amateur and scholastic sports coaches.



FOCUS ON SCHOOLS, RELIGION - Advocates for the NY Child Victims Act held a Lobby Day in Albany where they visited individual legislators to urge them to support the bill. Among the speakers at the kick-off program for the day were, from left: television producer Steve Jiminez, Cardozo Law Professor Marci Hamilton, Mark Meyer Appel of Voice of Justice, and Rabbi Nuchem Rosenberg. Professor Hamilton said: "The cover up of child abuse in the Syracuse basketball and Penn State football systems, when added to all we have learned about the cover up in churches and synagogues -- cements what I have been saying for a decade: our laws favor pedophiles and hurt child sex abuse victims. I urge all members of the New York legislature to set aside politics this time for the sake of New York's children."