



The Legislature  
State of New York

January 10, 2025

Honorable Kathy Hochul  
New York State Governor  
NYS State Capitol  
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

Happy New Year! As you work on your 2025-26 New York State Budget proposal, we are writing to respectfully request you incorporate several common-sense public safety proposals to protect child victims that we have called for and introduced as legislation.

As you recall, in September 2023, one of our constituents, a 9-year-old Corinth girl was abducted from Moreau Lake State Park in Saratoga County. Fortunately, she was safely found and returned home thanks to the fact the New York State Police were able to capitalize on the kidnapper's mistake of leaving a fingerprint on the ransom note, and that his prints were on file from a DWI in the 1990s.

In the months following her rescue, the child survivor faced numerous occasions of being retraumatized in her dealings with the legal system as part of the run-up to the kidnapper's conviction.

In the past year, we have worked closely with the girl's family (the Sena's) on legislation, "The Child Survivor Privacy Act," (S.22) to help survivors who are minors by ensuring they have a dedicated advocate present during all questioning and proceedings. Many times, when minors must share their story and give depositions in such a case, there is either no advocate present or a different person accompanying them each time.

When a child must go through this over and over again to get testimony, it's bad enough what they went through, but to have to visually be in front of their abductor is a terrible burden. We also are seeking the protection of the privacy of minors by shielding court records. Currently, cases for minor sexual assault victims are sealed upon a family's request, and not automatically.

Specifically, we are asking you to incorporate into your state budget proposal or subsequent 30-day amendments language to:

- Make the identity of the child victim anonymous throughout a criminal proceeding unless a request is made to identify the child victim. Such request may be made by the child victim, and/or such child victim's parent, guardian, or advocate.
- Prohibit any audio-visual coverage in a criminal proceeding in which there is a child victim of a crime, or the child victim is a child witness.

- Whenever practicable, the same prosecutor, advocate, and/or social worker shall handle all aspects of a case involving an alleged child victim and shall collaborate with one another to minimize the child victim's stress of recounting events of the case during interviews and throughout the course of the proceeding.

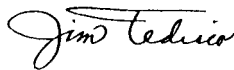
Additionally, we have been working closely with nationally-recognized missing persons advocate Mary Lyall of Ballston Spa, the mother of Suzanne Lyall, who went missing from SUNY Albany in 1998, and the Center for Hope, to request your support and inclusion in your state budget proposal of a dedicated unit in the New York State Police solely focused on solving missing persons cases and cold cases.

Last year, we reached out to you and asked that you implement the placement of security cameras at the entrances and exits of all state parks. And you did just that in the budget and we applaud you for it. We now respectfully request you take a similar approach to these proposals to protect child victims and enhance public safety.

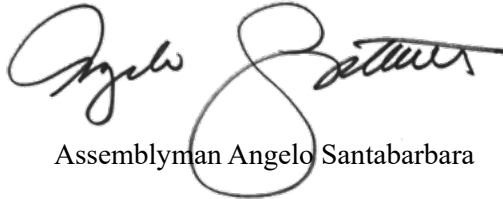
Governor, we know how personally involved you have been in the Sena case and your wonderful interaction and connection with the family, and we appreciate all the efforts you made in the successful search to find her and bring her home as well. We hope you look at this proposal and our legislation and include it in your state budget proposal or 30-day amendments.

We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,



Senator Jim Tedisco



Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara