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**Look inside to
learn more**
about the signs of
domestic violence and
important resources in
our community



An important bulletin from **Assemblyman Pat Burke**

**Look inside for a domestic
violence awareness toolkit**

Assemblyman Pat Burke

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ASSEMBLYMAN BURKE IS STANDING UP FOR SURVIVORS

Helping survivors of domestic violence

More than 10 million women and men in the United States face intimate partner violence each year, and escaping the situation is not always as easy as simply leaving.

Assemblyman Burke is encouraging the governor to sign measures streamlining the procedure for early lease termination by domestic violence survivors and prohibiting landlords from disclosing the termination of tenancy to future landlords (A.4267), as well as allowing victims of domestic violence to cancel telephone or cable contracts without incurring cancellation fees (A.5318). These measures will help victims break away from their abusers and regain control of their life.

Assemblyman Burke also helped pass measures to expand the definition of "victim of domestic violence" in the Social Services Law to include victims of identity theft, grand larceny and coercion and assure that they are eligible for certain victim services (Ch. 153 of 2019), as well as allow victims to receive damages for economic and non-economic losses from all defendants found liable in civil court (Ch. 180 of 2019). Additionally, Assemblyman Burke helped pass bills to increase the statute of limitations for a civil action to recover damages for injuries arising from domestic violence (A. 1945) and simplify the language in court documents so that victims understand their legal rights and access to support services (A.7395).

Supporting local domestic violence organizations

Assemblyman Burke helped pass the 2019-20 state budget, which includes \$100,000 in funding for the Family Justice Center of Erie County and \$50,000 for the Family Violence and Women's Rights Clinic at the University at Buffalo School of Law. These organizations provide critical services for domestic violence victims and their families, where they can get the help and support they need to escape their abuse and begin the healing process.

The Justice for Rachael Act

Our community faced a tragic loss last year when 22-year-old Rachael Wierzbicki was allegedly murdered by her boyfriend. He was charged and remanded to jail without bail until a hearing in March when a state Supreme Court justice set his bail at \$175,000. He was released that afternoon, sparking outrage throughout the community, especially among Rachael's family and friends. Assemblyman Burke has been fighting to give Rachael and her loved ones the justice they deserve and is pushing for legislation known as the Justice for Rachael Act, which would prevent those indicted for murder from being released on recognizance or bail (A.6688).

Dear Neighbor,

No one should ever fear for their life or well-being in their own home. This year, I supported new measures to protect our families and ensure victims of abuse and domestic violence can escape their abusers and seek the justice they deserve.

Enclosed, you will find a toolkit to help you recognize the signs of domestic violence and learn about resources available in our community. I hope you find this toolkit useful and share it with your friends and family. By working together, we can truly make a difference in our community.

As always, I want to hear from you. If you have questions or concerns, please contact my office.

Patrick Burke



TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

It is important to be able to recognize whether your teenager may be in an abusive relationship.

Relationship abuse is more common than you think. One in 3 teenagers experience some form of dating violence.

- 82% of parents think they could tell if their child was in an abusive relationship – yet only 45% of parents recognize warning signs and red flags
- Only 33% of teens who have been in or known about an abusive relationship ever tell someone about it
- 16- to 24-year-olds experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence – three times the national average

Know the Red Flags

- Partner thinks or tells your teen that you (parents) or friends don't like them
- They are depressed or anxious, or you notice changes in their personality
- Stops seeing friends and family members and becomes more isolated
- Loss of interest in activities that she or he used to enjoy
- Partner checks cellphones, emails or social networks without permission
- They have unexplained marks or injuries, or the explanations they offer don't make sense

Keep in mind that relationship abuse is all about power and control. Any attempt to swoop in and make demands of your child could backfire and make them shut down or may even put them in greater danger.

Visit reachoutwny.org for tools on how to have the conversation with the teen in your life.

Source: reachoutwny.org/caring-adults

RESOURCES

For immediate help and to report a crime, call **911**

Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Hotline: **1-800-942-6906**

Adult Protective Services: **1-844-697-3505**

For shelter in Erie County, call **716-884-6000**

Crisis Services: **716-834-3131**

Erie County District Attorney's Office Domestic Violence Bureau: **716-858-4630**

Erie County Sheriff's Office Domestic Violence Hotline: **716-858-7999**

Family Justice Center of Erie County, Inc.: **716-558-SAFE (7233)**

Haven House Child and Family Services, Inc.: **716-884-6002**

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Does your partner...?

- Deny you access to family assets such as bank accounts, credit cards or car?
- Control all finances and force you to account for what you spend?
- Force you to be intimate against your will?
- Force you to engage in intimate acts you do not enjoy?
- Insult you or call you derogatory names?
- Use intimidation or manipulation to control you or your children?
- Humiliate you in front of others?
- Turn minor incidents into major arguments?
- Abuse or threaten to abuse pets?
- Hit, punch, slap, kick, shove or bite you?
- Threaten to hurt you or your children?
- Threaten to hurt friends or family members?
- Have sudden outbursts of anger or rage?
- Behave in an overprotective manner?
- Become jealous without reason?
- Prevent you from seeing family or friends?
- Prevent you from going where you want, when you want, without repercussions?
- Prevent you from working or attending school?
- Destroy personal property or sentimental items?

If you answered yes to one or more of the above, you might be a victim of domestic violence.

You are not alone.
**Domestic violence
is a crime.**

Are you a victim of domestic violence?

Domestic violence is much more than physical abuse – it can also include many other kinds of abuse such as emotional, psychological, financial and sexual.

This is not your fault

The thing that most abusers have in common is that they minimize, deny and blame. They might make you think that the abuse is your fault. Nothing you did caused it, and nothing you do can stop it. Only an abuser can choose to stop abusing.

You are not alone

Domestic violence can happen to anyone. Reports indicate that as many as 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men in the United States have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner. It can feel isolating, like no one understands what you are going through and why it may be hard to end the relationship. But it's important to remember that there are resources that can help – you don't have to go through this alone.

Help is available

Your local hotline can provide you with information on domestic violence resources in your community.

Source: opdv.ny.gov/help/victims/index.html
ncadv.org/statistics

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