S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

4077

2009-2010 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

April 9, 2009

Introduced by Sen. SQUADRON -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Social Services

AN ACT to amend the social services law, in relation to offering applicants and recipients of public assistance information regarding sexual assault

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Legislative findings and purposes. The legislature finds that a disproportionately large number of public assistance recipients have been victims of sexual assault. Studies have estimated that as many as 40 percent of all individuals receiving public assistance were sexually abused as children. These victims frequently face significant barriers to self-sufficiency due to their history of sexual abuse. These barriers may include mental illness, substance abuse problems and domestic violence issues. It is therefore the intent and purpose of this act to increase outreach to this population and expand access to essential services necessary for victims of sexual assault to overcome the physical, mental and emotional trauma associated with such forms of abuse.

S 2. Section 131 of the social services law is amended by adding a new subdivision 20 to read as follows:

20. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBDIVISION AND THE REGULATIONS OF THE OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE, SOCIAL SERVICES DISTRICTS SHALL MAKE ALL APPLICANTS FOR AND RECIPIENTS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AWARE OF THEIR OPTION TO RECEIVE AN INFORMATION PACKET APPROPRIATE FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT. SUCH INFORMATION PACKET SHALL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO ALL INDIVIDUALS WHO DEMONSTRATE A NEED FOR OR WHO ARE INTERESTED IN RECEIVING SERVICES APPROPRIATE FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND SHALL INCLUDE REFERRAL AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ALL LOCAL PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [ ] is old law to be omitted.

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(A) SEXUAL ASSAULT EXAMINER PROGRAMS, INCLUDING A LIST OF ANY LOCAL HOSPITALS OFFERING SEXUAL ASSAULT FORENSIC EXAMINER SERVICES CERTIFIED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH;

(B) RAPE CRISIS CENTERS; AND

(C) OTHER ADVOCACY, COUNSELING, AND HOTLINE SERVICES APPROPRIATE FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT.

S 3. This act shall take effect on the one hundred eightieth day after it shall have become a law.