



New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault

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New York Passes New Campus Sexual Assault Laws “Enough Is Enough” To Combat College Sexual Assault

[New York] The New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault (“the Alliance”) is very pleased to see the passage of a bill that aims to significantly change the response to campus sexual assault in New York State. Three-way agreement was reached yesterday by Gov. Andrew Cuomo, Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan, and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie.

The bill will require all private colleges and universities of New York State to adopt uniform policies to address sexual harassment and assault. It implements many of the measures initiated by the Governor and adopted by the City University of New York (CUNY) and State University of New York (SUNY) in December, 2014.

Among most important elements of the bill are the adoption of an affirmative consent standard for sexual activity, a bill of rights for students who are alleging sexual assault or harassment and the requirement of a fair and timely adjudication process upon reporting to certain college administrators or campus safety staff. Provisions of the bill require campuses to notify all students of their rights, to provide education on sexual assault, to offer amnesty for drug and alcohol violations for those reporting an incident of sexual assault and to train all campus staff who will be responding to this issue. The bill also affords certain due process protections to those accused of violations of this policy. Finally, the Governor and legislature put resources to create a new sexual assault victims unit within the NY state police, to enable rape crisis centers to assist to student survivors as well as provide expert training and policy implementation to campus administrators. Colleges and universities will also receive funding support. This passage of this bill along with policies adopted by the CUNY and SUNY put New York State in the forefront of fighting sexual violence on campus.

The Alliance took a leadership role in building consensus and support for the bill. Mary Haviland, Executive Director of the NYC Alliance Against Sexual Assault stated, “This is a major victory for the courageous students who have raised this issue on campuses throughout the state. This bill advances many of the principles central to fighting sexual violence: immediate assistance to its victims, holding perpetrators accountable with just punishment and programs that will prevent violence in the first instance. We thank the Governor for his leadership in responding to this issue and the NYS legislature for

its contributions that enabled passage of this bill. This positions New York State as a leader in ensuring that colleges and universities are safer places for the nearly 1.2 million students in our state.”

Niketa Sheth, President of the Board of Directors for the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault said, “The Alliance has been consistently working on campus sexual assault issue through its intervention and prevention programs over the years and we are glad to see the progress that this bill represents. We are proud of the Alliance’s role in this legislation and thank the Governor for his innovation and perseverance in crafting solutions to this serious issue”.

The New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault is an advocacy organization working to reduce sexual violence. Their mission is to build the capacity of communities, organizations, and institutions to advance the right to live free from sexual violence and reduce the harm it causes individuals, families, and society.

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