



New Hampshire Senate News Release

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Senate Passes Legislation Targeting Domestic Violence, Protecting Victims

Concord, NH – Bills passed today by the New Hampshire Senate will recodify the state's domestic violence statutes and improve security at the state's licensed visitation centers. Both pieces of legislation stem from an attack last year at a supervised visitation center in Manchester.

Senate Bill 318 would synchronize New Hampshire law with the federal domestic violence statutes. Currently, New Hampshire is one of only 15 states without a specific domestic violence law. Named Joshua's Law in memory of Joshua Savyon, who was killed during a court ordered supervised visit by his father who under a domestic violence protection order, the legislation will clarify for law enforcement and judicial personnel what is and what is not domestic violence, information that is important for setting release conditions and protecting victims.

"This legislation is long overdue in New Hampshire," said Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Sharon Carson, R-Londonderry. "While there is nothing we can do to undue this tragedy, this law will ensure that those we ask to protect victims of domestic violence have the tools they need to prosecute these crimes effectively, and to track and identify trends that can help law enforcement to better address this problem across the state."

Additionally, Senate Bill 205, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Jeb Bradley, R-Wolfeboro, seeks to address the shortcomings at the state's supervised visitation centers that allowed Joshua's father to bring a weapon into the facility. Currently, only two supervised sites in the state utilize metal detectors.

"Under this bill, courts will have the authority to limit supervised visits to those facilities that have detection equipment and trained security personnel – that is an important first step," said Bradley. "Further, the legislation authorizes a commission of legislators, judicial and law enforcement personnel, and victim advocates to take a comprehensive look at the state's supervised visitation centers in order to ensure these facilities are able to safely provide the services the state expects of them, and to offer suggestions for how we can improve the work being done at these centers."

Both bills passed the Senate unanimously and now move to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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