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Suffolk County Psychological Association

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P.O. Box 20088 ■ Huntington Station, NY 11746 ■ (631) 423-2409

April 20, 2009

The Honorable Margaret M. Markey, Assemblywoman, 30<sup>th</sup> Assembly District  
LOB 654 Albany, NY 12248

The Honorable Thomas Duane, Senator, 29<sup>th</sup> Senate District  
430 State Capitol Building Albany, NY 12247

*Subject:* Support for the Child Victims' Act of New York (A2596 Markey) and (S2568 Duane)

Dear Assemblywoman Markey and Senator Duane:

Thank you both for sponsoring the Child Victims' Act of New York. The Suffolk County Psychological Association, representing 220 psychologists, is pleased to announce to you our full and public support of this sorely needed legislative reform. We support the Child Victims' Act for two reasons; first, because it will afford an opportunity for justice and public vindication for past victims of child sexual abuse, and second, because it will help protect the children of New York State from the unknown sexual predators living among us. Children are precious, but also vulnerable, and voiceless. We must not deny them their civil right to be protected from harm and their legal right to redress when they have been harmed.

As psychologists, we fully recognize the challenges the victims of childhood sexual abuse face. Because of the short, complicated, and unreasonable statutes of limitation in New York State, courthouse doors have been slammed shut long before the victim-survivors who do come forward have arrived. Hence, the victim-survivors of such abuse are further victimized by the law itself, which blocks them from obtaining justice, while shielding their predators and their enablers. We know that only 10% of such abuse is reported to law enforcement and that for the survivors of childhood sexual abuse who do come forward, decades can pass before they are ready and capable of seeking the justice and public vindication they deserve. We, as mental health professionals, are all too aware of the horrific, devastating suffering experienced by the victim-survivors until they come to understand the relationship between the problems in their lives and the injury they suffered at the hands of their abuser.

Again, despite any opposition you may face, we applaud your sponsorship of the critically important Child Victims' Act of New York and we lend our full and public support to A2596 Markey in the Assembly and S2568 Duane in the Senate. It is our strongest hope and desire that all the members of the Assembly and Senate will keep the main thing the main thing in this issue of such self-evident concern. The main thing is the children of New York State, their civil rights: to be protected from potential harm by sexual predators, and if they are harmed, to enable them to seek legal redress and public vindication when they are ready and capable. It is about nothing else!

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Steven Hartman  
President, SCPA