

What Happens On A Lobbying Day?

Submitted by John and Kay Traynor

My Wife Kay & I had the privilege to participate in Lobby Day, April 21, in Albany, NY, in support of the Child Victims Act. This is the fourth time I have been in attendance, and I must say this was the most organized presentation to date. We drove to Albany, others arrived by bus and train, but this years group was the most diversified yet.

In attendance in large numbers were the Survivors for Justice representing the Orthodox and Hasidic Communities from Brooklyn and Mid-State, the National Organization for Women [NOW], Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests [SNAP], NY Coalition to Protect Children, and VOTF, as well as many others.

A press conference began at 11 AM with Assemblywoman Marge Markey, sponsor of A 2596, introducing the speakers including Marci Hamilton who spoke at a LI-VOTF regional meeting a few years ago, numerous Rabbi's, representatives of SNAP, and the Most Reverend Anthony Evans, President of the National Black Church Initiative, based in Washington, DC, that represents seventeen denominations, which includes 34,000 African-American faith based Churches.

After the press conference, we broke into small groups of six or seven that would visit assigned Legislators most of whom were either against, or wavering, on the legislation. Kay and I were working with the Rev. Evans, Brian Walsh of SNAP, and two women from the Jewish community, and one young Jewish man. It should be noted that the Jewish men wore their long black coats, black hats, black suits, and white shirts.

We felt that we were a very diverse group as we traveled the halls of Albany, wearing our pins that said "Protect Children, Not Predators"

We visited the offices of 8 Legislators, and where we had appointments we were greeted by the Legislator and granted ample time to present our support for the legislation, find out why they had reservations, and respond with the reasons they should support our position. We had many open discussions, sincere answers on their

part, and found in most cases our arguments were responded to because of our knowledge of both the Markey bill and Lopez bill. Two Assembly members stated that they would now support the Markey bill. In offices where we met with Legislative Directors, one stated that he was embarrassed by his previous meeting with the NYS Catholic Conference, Bishop's Lobbying Arm, at their arguments why his Legislator should support the Lopez bill. It should be noted that he is an active Catholic.

As we left all offices, we felt that either speaking with the Legislator, or their Legislative Director, that we had made a positive impression, introducing a variety of reasons for them to consider further their position on "The Child Victim Act".

In one case we ask for your prayers and support for Assemblywoman Janele Hyer-Spenser of the 60th. District in Bayridge, Brooklyn and part of Staten Island. She stated that as an ADA she prosecuted Child Abuse cases, and she had happily signed on as a Co-Sponsor to the Markey bill last year. She said she immediately received over 500 letters, emails, and phone calls, calling for her recall from office from her very Irish Catholic constituency, unless she withdrew her support for the Markey Bill. She feels that her support this year may cost her any chance of re-election in 2010. If you know of any one in her district, please contact them in support of the Markey bill, and pray that Janele again supports our legislation.

We ended the day by being presented to the Assembly in the Assembly Chamber as in support of Assemblywoman Markey's bill. I also met Assemblyman Michael Fitzpatrick, who is for the Lopez bill, and we exchanged warm greetings. He acknowledged that he receives my letters and emails, and one day I hope to win him over to our position.

Please continue to write to your Legislators.

That is what many said influences them!

"What the People in their Districts are Saying to Them".

Kay & John Traynor

(Members of St. Thomas More Parish VOICE, Hauppauge, New York)