



DAILY GAZETTE

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PEF NEWSCLIP

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Don't just pass laws, make workplace safer

I am gratified that the governor has signed the "Workplace Violence Prevention Bill," legislation that promises to be another important step in promoting workplace safety. It requires public employers to assess risk and develop and implement written plans of action to prevent potential workplace violence.

This bit of news got me thinking about a past landmark public safety measure: Gov. Pataki's "Model workplace domestic violence policy," announced to much fanfare in 2000. This measure encouraged state agencies to take a model policy developed by the state and adapt it to their particular set of circumstances.

The measure recognized that "in addition to exacting a tremendous toll from individuals it directly affects, domestic violence often spills over into the workplace, compromising the safety of both victims and co-workers and resulting in lost productivity, increased health care costs, increased absenteeism and increased employee turnover."

Much research and effort went into the development of this policy, as vivid examples of this kind of violence are common on nightly newscasts. However, our governor did not make it mandatory for state agencies, as did the governors of Massachusetts and Maryland. The state Web site lists 108 state agencies or subdivisions. To date, possibly seven agencies have developed their own policies using this model.

I think it is high time we require all state agencies not only to develop such a workplace domestic violence policy, but also to provide the yearly training necessary for its proper implementation — much like we do with sexual harassment training.

Please, Gov. Pataki, do it by executive order; it would add a very important achievement to your legacy of making women and girls safer in New York state.

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