

**'Julie's Law' Proposed To Enhance Courthouse Security**  
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## **'Julie's Law' Proposed To Enhance Courthouse Security**

By DOUGLAS S. MALAN

Julie M. Porzio stood in front of a gathering at the State Capitol on Tuesday afternoon and announced, with a sometimes faltering voice, her appreciation to legislators who have introduced a bill that would enhance courthouse security throughout the state.

Dubbed "Julie's Law", House Bill 5678 awaits a public hearing within the next month to address its proposal for immediately hiring more Judicial State Marshals, increasing the number of security cameras in courthouses and their parking areas and installation of key card systems for entrances to parking areas.

Her appearance came 14 months after a client's estranged husband shot Porzio four times in a Middletown parking lot prior to another court appearance during a highly emotional divorce proceeding. The client, Donna Bochicchio, was killed by Michael Bochicchio, who then turned the gun on himself.

The bipartisan bill would provide \$1 million for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, to fund an evaluation of security systems in and around state courthouses and another \$9 million to fund the installation of enhanced security measures, including more judicial marshals and increased training.

"We need to have a macro view of the entire system, not just the hardware (metal detectors and cameras) but the entire process," said state Senator Joan V. Hartley, D-15th District, who vowed her support along with Republican representatives David K. Labriola and Anthony J. D'Amelio.

Porzio and the three politicians all said that a more efficient communication system alerting judges, lawyers and courthouse staff of dangerous litigants would have averted the deadly attack in June 2005. Judicial marshals were aware that Michael Bochicchio brought a loaded gun into Middlesex Superior Court on a previous occasion but never informed Porzio, who said she would have called for a halt to the case pending a psychological examination of Bochicchio.

Her devastating experience "was the perfect example of what should not have happened," Porzio said. "It was a tragic, preventable event. I don't know why the judicial marshals didn't tell us [about the gun]. It's inexplicable."

Anthony Pizighelli, president of the judicial marshals union, expressed to Porzio his group's backing of the bill.

"We're going to support this 100 percent," he told her, confirming the need for more staffing, better communication and better safety equipment.

Porzio still faces numerous surgeries and rehabilitation to regain movement in all of her fingers on her left hand and continues to battle post-traumatic stress disorder that leaves her anxious and unsure of her surroundings, she said.

The Waterbury lawyer's caseload still involves family law matters, but she's more careful in vetting clients and one "certainly couldn't call [my caseload] fulltime," she noted. She has begun branching out in personal injury, real estate and probate matters, as well.

Porzio's lawyer, Joseph Tacopina, stood by her side at the Capital and described as "alarming" the facts of a case that will be filed against the state, the city of Middletown and Michael Bochicchio's estate. Tacopina called the shooting "one of the greatest failures of a system designed to protect the public..."

Tacopina is a Manhattan-based lawyer and name partner of Tacopina & Seigel who has defended high-profile clients such as Michael Jackson and Dutch teen Joran van der Sloot, who was linked—along with his father, Paulis—to the disappearance of Alabama teen Natalee Holloway in Aruba.

Tacopina is representing Porzio through a joint partnership with Timothy C. Moynahan of Moynahan & Minnella of Waterbury and Hartford.

Tacopina and Moynahan recently opened a Southport office to handle Porzio's case.

Moynahan also attended the briefing at the Capitol and said courthouse security is a matter that stretches across all state lines.

"We're on the cusp of what is a movement that ought to be a country-wide movement, not just in federal courts but in state courts, as well," he said.

An act similar to 'Julie's Law' has been introduced at the federal level. The Court Security and Improvement Act of 2007 allocates more resources to U.S. Marshals and creates new criminal penalties for threats of harm to judges and their families. •