



STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
ALBANY 12224

VETO #122

December 21, 2024

TO THE ASSEMBLY:

I am returning herewith, without my approval, the following bill:

Assembly Bill Number 9232-B, entitled:

“AN ACT to amend the estates, powers and trusts law, in relation to the payment and distribution of damages in wrongful death actions”

NOT APPROVED

This bill would substantially reshape the legal framework for wrongful death actions in New York by expanding the types of damages that may be recovered, expanding the class of persons who may seek such damages and extending the statute of limitations.

The sheer magnitude of pain and sorrow from losing a loved one because of the senseless, careless actions of another is indescribable. As I have said before, I believe that grieving families should be able to look to the law and to the courts for justice, accountability and meaningful compensation for their loss. Families who have lost their loved ones under heartbreaking circumstances have advocated for changes to New York’s wrongful death law. Their calls for change highlight the inadequacies of a system that often perpetuates inequities by valuing human life based on earning potential.

Over the past few years, the Legislature has passed legislation that would make substantial changes to New York’s wrongful death law, would fundamentally altering wrongful death jurisprudence. While well-intentioned, these changes would likely have resulted in higher costs to patients and consumers, as well as other unintended consequences. For the third year in a row, the Legislature has passed a bill that continues to pose significant risks to consumers, without many of the changes I expressed openness to in previous rounds of negotiations. At a time when New Yorkers are already facing higher costs of living due to inflation and other factors, genuine concerns have been raised that the bill may lead to higher costs, including insurance premiums, and may also risk the financial well-being of our healthcare system, including those hospitals that serve disadvantaged communities.

Every human life is valuable and should be recognized as such in the eyes of the law. I remain open to working collaboratively to find solutions that support impacted families while avoiding unintended consequences. At this time, I believe further deliberations are needed.

Therefore, I am constrained to veto this bill.

The bill is disapproved.

Ruth Hochul