



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Rich Funke

Senate Passes Funke Bills to Crack Down on Sex Offenders

RICH FUNKE June 2, 2015

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The New York State Senate today passed S.4765, a bill sponsored by Senator Rich Funke that would make it a felony for a sex offender to fail to appear at a court hearing to determine the risk level of the offender. The Senate also passed S.4776, sponsored by Funke, which would expand the information available on the State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) sex offender registry's website. Both bills passed with bipartisan support.

"When it comes to keeping our kids safe from dangerous offenders, information is one of our most powerful preventative tools," said Funke. "Cracking down on offenders who fail to register as required by law and making identifying information more widely available are common sense solutions to head-off assaults before they happen. I'm grateful to my colleagues in the Senate for passing these bills with strong bipartisan support."

In addition to making it a felony for a sex offender to fail to appear at a risk level determination hearing, S.4765 would also eliminate a defense currently available to a sex offender who fails to annually verify his or her address with DCJS. Currently, if the sex offender has not changed his or her address, and does not annually verify his or her address, it is not a violation of the Sex Offender Registration Act. This bill makes any failure to annually verify a class E felony.

S.4776 would address a failure in the current Sex Offender Registration Act that does not require all information about sex offenders to be accessible on the state Registry's website. Instead, a person must call the 800 number operated by the state to learn of low-risk offenders in their community. While the 800 number has proven to be useful to businesses and volunteer agencies seeking to screen employees, the number is not available outside normal business hours and the caller must have extensive details such as the sex offender's

name and either the offender's exact address, date of birth, social security number, or driver's license number. This bill would make more information about all registered sex offenders available on the DCJS website to expand the utility of the Registry and enhance the safety of New York's most vulnerable citizens.

The bills have been sent to the Assembly.