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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **SENATE MAJORITY LEADER MALCOLM A. SMITH & SENATOR CRAIG JOHNSON ANNOUNCE MAJOR STATEWIDE LEGISLATION AIMED TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM SEX OFFENDERS**

In his first visit to Long Island since being elected State Senate Majority Leader earlier this month, Senator Malcolm A. Smith met today with Senator Craig Johnson to announce the introduction of a major piece of statewide legislation that will protect children from predators.

The bill, S.1300, is a direct response to a recent State Supreme Court decision that invalidated Rockland County's sex offender residency law. That ruling nullified the local law asserting that under state law, the express authority to determine housing residency for sex offenders lies only with local probation offices. Using that standard some 80 local "child safety zone" laws across the state risk invalidation.

"While I have the utmost respect for the judicial branch, this particular decision is the result of a confusing patchwork of laws that we seek to simplify," Senator Smith said. "Myself and Senator Johnson are both parents, and we understand the importance of getting our laws right so that no child is placed in harm's way."

"We have strong laws on the books on Long Island, and we have to do everything we can to ensure that these protections remain," said Senator Johnson, who co-sponsored Nassau County's local law while serving as a member of the county legislature. "Furthermore, by passing this on the state level we can insure that every child, in every community across New York will have access to the very same protections."

#### **Senator Johnson's legislation would:**

- Prohibit a registered sex offender from living within 1,000 feet of a school building, park, or day care center.
- Establish the state's Penal Law mandate that the first offense of this law be a Class A misdemeanor, allowing for the presiding judge to mandate up to one year imprisonment. Subsequent offenses will be a Class D felony, allowing for up to seven years of imprisonment.

"I commend Senator Johnson for this legislation and thank Senator Smith for coming today. Much like Nassau's local laws, Suffolk County's own laws were written with one goal in mind—give parents the assurance that every child is being protected. This bill is important because as we saw in Rockland County, not much stands in the way of our laws against sexual predators from being overturned," said Senator Brian X. Foley (D-Blue Point).

The legislation is currently in the Senate's Committee on Crime Victims, Crime and Corrections. Discussions with potential Assembly sponsors are ongoing.

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