



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick

Senator Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick Calls on the Legislature to Stop Law Breaking Criminals Who Are Squatting in People's Homes

PATRICIA CANZONERI-FITZPATRICK March 25, 2024



An amendment that would help homeowners by making “squatters” who inhabit a home without permission subject to a theft crime within the penal code

An amendment that would help homeowners by making “squatters” who inhabit a home without permission subject to a theft crime within the penal code

ALBANY, NY – New York State Senator Patricia Canzoneri- Fitzpatrick is calling on the Legislature to stop law breaking criminals who are squatting in people’s homes. Senator Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick today proposed an amendment that would help homeowners by making “squatters” who inhabit a home without permission subject to a theft crime within the penal code.

Under current law, squatters are treated as licensees, requiring full eviction proceedings and are afforded rights of those who are lawfully occupying the property.

Recently, there have been several high-profile reports of squatters – particularly on Long Island and in New York City – including the horrific case where two suspected squatters were arrested for beating a woman to death inside a New York City apartment and then stuffing her body in a duffle bag.

Laws that favor criminals have given rise to online forums that encourage people to take over properties by squatting, even going as far as to provide squatting “how-to” guides. In that same week, a viral TikTok video took the internet by storm as a Venezuelan “migrant influencer” created an online forum encouraging others “invade unoccupied homes and invoke squatters' rights.

“In a State like New York that offers some of the most tenant-friendly laws in the nation, it is entirely illogical to offer similar protections to squatters. The mere notion of so-called “squatters rights” is nonsensical and is having devastating effects on property owners who are forced to continue paying real estate taxes, possibly a mortgage and other expenses while a squatter wrongly occupies their property,” said Senator Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick.

“The legislature must prioritize public safety for our Long Island residents. The amendment today would make it clear that squatters and those who occupy property without permission from the owner are not treated as tenants and have no right to remain on the property. Until our policies stop favoring criminal behavior, cases such as these will only continue to get worse.

“If someone steals your credit card information, they don’t get to keep using your information under “credit card scammer’s rights. If someone steals your car, they don’t get to keep driving it under “car jacker’s rights.” Why is New York State allowing people to remain in homes they have no right to occupy in the first place? Why are we rewarding wrongdoers with legal rights?” concluded Senator Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick.

Unfortunately, every Senate Democrat voted against the measure advanced by Senator Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick that would protect the rights of property owners over so-called "squatters rights."