



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

Hinchey, Barrett, Beephan Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Protect Children in Youth Programs

MICHELLE HINCHEY February 21, 2025



New Legislation Closes Loophole That Leaves Many Youth Programs Operating Without Mandatory Staff and Owner Background Checks

ALBANY, NY — Today, Senator Michelle Hinchey, Assemblymember Didi Barrett, and Assemblymember Anil Beephan announced new legislation ([S.5257A](#) / *Assembly bill pending*) to strengthen protections for children participating in extracurricular activities. The bill prevents registered sex offenders from owning, running, or working at businesses that regularly provide instructional, recreational, or extracurricular activities to youth. The bill also requires background checks of state and federal sex offender registries before hiring or

ownership, including those from any state where the person has lived.

Current New York law does not require background checks for employees and operators of many businesses that serve minors, including martial arts academies, dance studios, tutoring centers, and sports training facilities—leaving significant gaps in child protection. This legislation closes that gap by ensuring registered sex offenders cannot be employed in or own businesses that provide youth services.

Senator Michelle Hinchey said, “Every parent should have the peace of mind that when they drop their child off at a local art class or sports facility, they’re entering a safe environment. This bill closes a loophole uncovered by a horrific situation in Dutchess County by barring registered sex offenders from working at youth-oriented businesses and requiring background checks before anyone can own or be hired at one. My heart breaks for the victims and families of this tragedy. When it comes to protecting our kids, these safeguards shouldn’t be optional—New York must make them law. I am committed, in partnership with Assemblymembers Barrett and Beephan, to get this bill passed and signed into law by the Governor.”

“The tragic pattern of sexual abuse at a martial arts school in Dutchess County has revealed a loophole in our background check system that must be fixed,” said **Assemblymember Didi Barrett**. “My heart goes out to the victims of this abuse. I am working in partnership with Senator Michelle Hinchey and Assemblymember Anil Beephan to pass bipartisan legislation to close this loophole and ensure that an incident like this doesn’t happen again. This common sense legislation will have employees of businesses that train minors be subject to mandatory background checks, protecting children and giving families peace of mind.”

Assemblymember Anil Beephan said, “First and foremost, my heart goes out to the victims and

their families who have been affected by this horrific situation. The safety of our children must always come first. It is unacceptable that loopholes in our laws have allowed registered sex offenders to work in or own businesses that provide youth services. This legislation is a necessary step to close that dangerous gap and ensure that every parent can have confidence that their child is safe when participating in extracurricular activities. I am proud to stand with Senator Hinchey and Assemblymember Barrett in advancing this bipartisan effort to protect our kids and strengthen background check requirements for those working with minors.”

###

RELATED LEGISLATION

2025-S5257A

- Introduced

- ◦ In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly

- Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

-

Requires mandatory background checks for persons employed by certain businesses serving minors and prohibiting certain persons from owning such businesses

February 20, 2025

In Senate Committee **Consumer Protection**

Sponsored by **Michelle Hinchey**

Do you support this bill?