



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Walczyk

## SENATOR WALCZYK URGES ACTION AGAINST DANGEROUS LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

MARK WALCZYK April 8, 2025

Senator Mark Walczyk today condemned a troubling legislative agenda that prioritizes the rights of incarcerated individuals over the safety and well-being of crime victims and our communities. As we observe National Crime Victims' Rights Week, it is especially ironic that these policies are being debated, as they do not enhance public safety; instead, they undermine the safety of our communities.

The Earned Time Act (S.342) aims to provide time allowances that credit incarcerated individuals for good behavior and participation in programs. While rehabilitation is important, this approach risks allowing potentially dangerous individuals to re-enter society prematurely. By incentivizing early release based on vague standards of "good behavior," we risk compromising the safety of our communities and the well-being of crime victims. Senator Walczyk stated, "This legislation sends the wrong message – it tells convicts that their rights and comfort outweigh the safety of law-abiding citizens."

Furthermore, the Fair and Timely Parole bill (S.159) proposes to diminish the standards that the Parole Board currently follows when determining parole eligibility. This bill shifts the focus away from public safety by requiring the Board to grant parole unless there is clear evidence of an unreasonable risk that the incarcerated individual will commit a crime again. "We must remember that the priority of the Parole Board should be the safety of the community. This bill might lead to the release of individuals who pose a significant risk to society, further endangering New Yorkers," Senator Walczyk continued.

Senator Walczyk highlighted concerning statistics regarding recidivism, noting that a staggering 82 percent of inmates released from state prison reoffend at least once within ten years. This data underscores the potential dangers of implementing such lenient parole guidelines.

"We must prioritize the safety of our communities and the protection of crime victims over the premature release of prisoners who have demonstrated a pattern of re-offending," stated Senator Walczyk. "The claims that this bill will save the state money are misleading. While proponents argue that the legislation could save the state between \$60,000 and \$240,000 per released inmate, we must consider the hidden costs associated with increased crime rates. Releasing violent offenders could lead to more victims and consequently higher costs for law enforcement, investigation, and prosecution. The potential financial savings pale in comparison to the risks we would impose on our communities and the potential costs tied to rising crime."

This series of proposed acts, coupled with Governor Hochul's reckless early parole policies, signifies a dangerous shift in New York State's approach to criminal justice that undermines the fundamental principles of public safety and justice. These bills, if passed, could dramatically alter the standards for parole release and the considerations made by the Parole Board, ultimately undermining the safety of New Yorkers.

"We need solutions that restore order, not chaos! DOCCS should be rehiring terminated officers, suspending the HALT Act, and securing facilities against dangerous drugs—not releasing criminals early," he asserted. "It is time for us to put the interests of victims first and take a strong stand against proposals that jeopardize public safety," Senator Walczyk concluded.