



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo, Senate Republicans push back pro-criminal legislation from the legislative majorities

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As part of his ongoing advocacy for policies putting crime victims before criminals and during National Crime Victims' Rights Week, state Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-C-Rome, recently joined with his colleagues in the Senate Republican Conference in opposition to two controversial pieces of dangerous pro-prisoner legislation that were passed by Senate Democrats during a Senate Crime Victims, Crime and Correction Committee meeting earlier this week.

The first bill, S.342, would allow inmates to reduce their prison sentences by up to 75 percent through good time and merit time allowances, regardless of the severity of their crimes. Under this proposal, someone convicted of a serious offense, such as Rape in the First Degree or Assault in the First Degree, could be released after serving just 6.25 years. Worse still, once inmates earn merit time credits, the

Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) would be unable to revoke them, even if the inmate engages in misconduct while incarcerated.

The second bill, S.159, would dramatically change the parole process. It would presume that an inmate should be released unless the Board of Parole can prove the individual is currently an unreasonable risk to public safety. This shift in presumption would likely lead to more inmates being granted parole, even if they still pose a risk to the community.

Sen. Griffo continues to support policies, introduce legislation and propose initiatives that prioritize crime victims and law-abiding New Yorkers over criminals. He also recognizes the importance of expanding involuntary mental health commitments to enhance public safety and protect communities, especially given recent tragedies across New York City that have included the brutal attack of four young children in Brooklyn, individuals fatally pushed onto subway tracks and a woman burned alive on the F train. Many of these violent acts were carried out by individuals suffering from severe, untreated mental illness.

When it comes to reforming the state's parole system, Sen. Griffo has sponsored legislation (S.5094) that would ensure dangerous and violent felony offenders serve their maximum term. The bill was introduced following the 2011 sexual assault and murder of Linda Turner in Utica by a career rapist named Robert Blainey who had been released early from prison due to merit time earned for good behavior.

"One-party control of state government has resulted in policy after policy that prioritizes criminals over crime victims and law-abiding citizens," Sen. Griffo said. "While I recognize that criminal justice reform is needed, this is not the approach the state should be taking to accomplish this objective. We need policies, bills and initiatives that protect victims, support law enforcement and enhance public safety in communities across the state. This includes a bill that I sponsor that would allow the state Parole Board to require a violent felony offender to serve their maximum term, if release would pose an imminent threat to society. Legislation such as this will help to tip the scales of justice back toward protecting victims of crime."

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