



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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One-Party Rule, One Dangerous Agenda: Democrats Wage War on Public Safety

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(ALBANY, NY) – This week, in yet another disturbing example of Albany’s one-party rule prioritizing politics over public safety, Senate Democrats on the Codes Committee voted to block a slate of Republican-sponsored bills aimed at protecting New Yorkers from violent criminals, repeat offenders, and drug traffickers. Among the most consequential proposals rejected was Senator Steven Rhoads’ lifesaving bill (S.307), which would have finally closed a

dangerous loophole allowing fentanyl dealers to walk free without bail.

Senator Rhoads' bill was a direct response to the state's spiraling opioid crisis, fueled by synthetic opioids like fentanyl—50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. Between 2010 and 2020, opioid deaths in New York nearly tripled. In 2021 alone, the State Comptroller's Office reported over 5,800 overdose deaths. Nationally, fentanyl was linked to more than 100,000 deaths in the 12 months ending July 2022.

Under current law, only Class A felony drug offenses are bail eligible, meaning even high-level fentanyl traffickers can be released hours after arrest. Rhoads' bill would have allowed judges to set bail for A-II felonies such as Criminal Sale or Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree—crimes involving large quantities of fentanyl, methamphetamine, and similar deadly substances. The legislation would also have empowered prosecutors to pursue bail for any fentanyl or nitazine cases, making an immediate impact in stemming overdose deaths.

But instead of protecting lives, Senate Democrats voted in lockstep to shield dangerous drug dealers, prioritizing ideology over common sense and ignoring the pleas of prosecutors and public safety officials across the state.

The full list of public safety bills rejected by Democrats in the Senate Codes Committee this week include:

- **S.236 (Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick)** – Authorizes bail for defendants who pose a threat to public safety.

Vote: Defeated 4-9

- **S.307 (Rhoads)** – Authorizes bail for A-II felony offenses involving synthetic opioids.

Vote: Defeated 4-9

- **S.1041 (Palumbo)** – Increases penalties for vehicular assault, manslaughter, and homicide under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Vote: Defeated 4-9

- **S.1748 (Oberacker)** – Expands bail eligibility for arson-related felonies.

Vote: Defeated 4-9

- **S.2282A (Helming)** – Establishes the PROTECT Act, creating a risk assessment system for pretrial detention.

Vote: Defeated 5-8

- **S.3511 (Borrello)** – Increases penalties for repeat misdemeanors.

Vote: Defeated 4-9

- **S.1648 (Oberacker)** – Authorizes bail for aggravated animal cruelty offenses.

Vote: Defeated 4-9

These were not extreme measures—they were reasonable, targeted proposals to keep dangerous individuals off our streets, give prosecutors needed discretion, and restore accountability to a justice system now skewed in favor of offenders.

Sadly, this is business as usual in Albany—where radical ideology outweighs the voices of victims, law enforcement, and concerned families. That must end.

But there is hope. Senate Republicans are not backing down.

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Senator Rhoads said, “Senate Democrats made it clear they’d rather protect criminals than protect our communities. Their vote to block these commonsense public safety bills, including my legislation to hold fentanyl traffickers accountable, is a betrayal of every New Yorker who wants safer streets. We will not sit silently while they play politics with lives. We will continue

to fight to restore sanity to our criminal justice system, to end the epidemic of crime and addiction, and to stand with law-abiding New Yorkers who deserve to feel safe in their own neighborhoods. I urge every resident to pay close attention, and to contact the Senators who voted 'no' and hold them accountable for their decision. We believe in a safer, stronger New York—and we're not done fighting for it."