



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

Senator Valesky hosts Senator Eric Schneiderman, Chair of Senate Codes Committee, in Central New York

DAVID J. VALESKY August 13, 2009

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(SYRACUSE, N.Y.)—In a continuing effort to bring Central New York-specific issues to the forefront of the New York State Senate, Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) hosted Senator Eric Schneiderman (D-Manhattan/Bronx), chairman of the Senate Codes Committee, for a day of events in Madison and Onondaga counties.

“The Senate Codes Committee deals with law enforcement and criminal justice related legislation, which impact communities and constituents across Central New York,” said Senator Valesky, Vice President Pro-Tempore of the Senate. “I wanted to bring Senator Schneiderman here so people had the chance to speak to him about issues like anti-gang violence programs, illegal gun trafficking and also responsible gun ownership, and share their unique Central Upstate New York perspective.”

“I want to thank Senator Valesky for giving me the opportunity to engage in a productive dialogue with the people of Central New York on criminal justice issues. All stakeholders in this conversation – sportsmen and women, law enforcement officials and anti-illegal gun advocates — must have a seat at the table,” said Senator Schneiderman. “I am confident that more discussions like these will illuminate the areas where we can all find common ground, while promoting greater appreciation of the different public safety concerns of communities across the state.”

The day began with a visit to a rural archery and rifle store, where the store owner and representatives of the sportsmen and women community spoke with Senator Schneiderman about state and federal laws related to the sale and legal ownership of guns. The two Senators, joined by Senator Darrel Aubertine (D-Cape Vincent), then joined a group of sportsmen at the Oneida Rifle Club to discuss the impact of gun proposals on hunters and gun hobbyists, and participated in a sports shooting demonstration.

The range activities were followed by an open discussion about the common interests of sportsmen and women, gun-rights advocates, the law enforcement community and advocates working to reduce the proliferation of illegal guns.

“It was a good and honest discussion, that I think gave everyone involved a better perspective of the issues as they relate to Central New York,” said Senator Valesky. “Senator Schneiderman wanted to hear directly from the sportsmen and women I represent, and I wanted to give him a sense of the various activities enjoyed by the people of this Upstate community. I think this is going to be a continuing dialogue that will foster understanding and help us achieve common ground with respect to the rights of sportsmen and women while also giving law enforcement the tools they need.”

Senators Valesky and Schneiderman then visited the Faith Hope Community Center in Syracuse to meet with community advocates about the challenges faced by Syracuse inner-city youth.

Bob Harrison, one of the founders of the Center, described its mission—to offer kids and young adults a safe place to go and to teach them to resolve conflicts peacefully. He indicated that part of the problem that young adults in the city of Syracuse face is a lack of family facilities, like bowling alleys or sports centers.

The group discussed the need for prevention and intervention in identifying at-risk youth, and the benefits of “non-traditional” programs like the Faith Hope Center, which serves approximately 60 kids each day, and offers tutoring, boxing training, meditation and bereavement counseling.

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