



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

## **Senator LaValle Continues Fighting for Campus Safety-**

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## **Yale and Hofstra Crimes Offer Sad Reminder Of Need To Address Security Issues**

Senator Kenneth P. LaValle, ranking member of the Senate Higher Education Committee, is once again sponsoring a measure to increase security on college campuses across the state. The bill would ensure that every campus establish a comprehensive security plan as well as protocols for reporting concerns with regard to the mental health of a student.

“The Yale and Hofstra University crimes are a sad reminder of the need for greater focus on campus security,” said Senator LaValle. “As with the Columbine and Virginia Tech shootings, these incidents bring to light the question of whether our state and private colleges are prepared to handle, or better yet, prevent such tragedies from happening on campus.”

According to Senator LaValle, the bill he is sponsoring would require the development of a campus security plan that includes test drills and evaluations to determine effectiveness and compliance in responding to emergency situations. The measure also seeks to improve communications among campus security, local law enforcement, and emergency medical personnel and requires the use of pilot programs to test various technologies related to identifying and responding to security related issues.

As Chairman of the Higher Education Committee, Senator LaValle held several committee hearings prior to developing this legislation. Several witnesses testified that efforts to improve campus safety were feasible; however, it would be nearly impossible to detect the state-of-mind of a disturbed person. In response to this claim, Senator LaValle’s bill would also require college campuses to establish protocols for reporting concerns regarding the mental health of a student.

“One of the most dangerous barriers blocking student safety on campuses is privacy rights,” Senator LaValle said. “College officials are handcuffed by privacy laws that restrict administrators from notifying parents of their child’s health issues. This places the student, student body, and surrounding community in jeopardy.

“There is no single answer that will guarantee the absolute safety of college campuses,” continued Senator LaValle. “My legislation addresses campus security from two perspectives. First and foremost is identifying and implementing best practices in securing the safety of all students and personnel. Second is to develop a process to address mental health issues in a manner that protects an individual’s privacy. In either case, the bill provides direction while giving colleges and universities the flexibility needed to address security concerns in a manner best suited to the unique needs of an individual campus.”