



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Martin J. Golden

In the Wake of Incident at Visitation Academy, Senator Golden Supports Bill to Protect Religious Institutions From Desecration

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Brooklyn – State Senator Martin J. Golden (R-C-I, Brooklyn), is announcing that legislation he co-sponsored, S. 6338, which will increase the ability of law enforcement to prosecute crimes related to damaging property, or stealing religious items at any house of worship, has passed the New York State Senate.

Senator Golden is citing a recent incident on the grounds of Visitation Academy, that in addition to the school, also houses a Catholic Church and a Monastery, where religious statutes were desecrated in late March. The case is still pending and Senator Golden has posted a \$1000 reward for any information leading to an arrest of these vandals.

Senator Golden stated, "This legislation sends a strong message to those who choose to destruct, or steal from, religious property. This bill reaffirms my belief that acts of religious desecration and intolerance have no place in our society, and no one, no matter what faith you follow, approves of such hate."

Golden continued, "Many religious congregations wish to keep their houses of worship open for prayer and reflection, but the fear of vandalism and robbery, at times prevents this. I call upon the State Assembly to pass this legislation this year so that we can deter such criminal activity in New York State."

S. 6338 would allow anyone who damages, or takes, any property regardless of its nature or value in any building, structure or on the grounds of a house of worship or religious institution to be charged with a felony.

The bill was sent to the Assembly.