



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

## **Bill to Protect Law Enforcement Animals Passes Senate**

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March 25, 2013

Today, the NYS Senate overwhelmingly passed legislation that increases penalties for killing or injuring a police dog to a Class D Felony. This legislation, sponsored by Senator George D. Maziarz, is extremely important, as state and local law enforcement agencies increasingly rely on these animals in crime solving, rescue and recovery operations. Under current law, killing or injuring a police animal is a Class A misdemeanor.

In 2011, the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, including their K-9 unit responded to a burglary call in Niagara Falls. While tracking possible clues on the roof, Rocky, the Sheriff Office's K-9, leaped over a three-foot retaining wall and fell to his death. Eventually an individual was arrested on a number of charges, but not in the death of the beloved animal. Likewise, less than a month ago, in Herkimer County, an FBI dog named Ape was killed during a shootout with a gunman.

"Police Animals like Rocky and Ape do a remarkable job in protecting and serving our State," said Senator George D. Maziarz. "After these incidents were over, police officers were able to return home to their spouses and children because the dogs gave their life to protect them and the residents of that community. The use of police dogs is increasing, and they are being used for tasks that our own police officers used to do. It is time that we provide these animals the protection they deserve under the law when they are injured or die in the line of duty."

This legislation was sent to the Assembly, where it is currently in the Codes Committee.