



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Dean G. Skelos

Senate Passes Bill to Increase Juror Safety

DEAN G. SKELOS April 15, 2013

The New York State Senate today passed legislation to help protect jurors whose safety may be threatened, while also ensuring the integrity of judicial outcomes. The bill (S1513), sponsored by Senator Carl L. Marcellino (R-Syosset), allows the court to withhold names of jurors when a serious threat to juror safety exists.

“Jurors are often thrust into the eye of a storm simply because they are serving. They should never feel that their service will put themselves or their family in danger,” Senator Marcellino said. “Explicit threats to jurors or even just the anxiety of retaliation could affect a jurors' ability to fairly and impartially issue a verdict. Certainly jurors should not be expected to bear the burden of risking what may happen to them or their families should they render a guilty verdict.”

“The fear of retribution should not be a factor when decisions are being made in our courts,” Senate Republican Leader Dean G. Skelos said. “With so much personal information available online, this bill is common-sense legislation that can help protect the anonymity of jurors who may face threats to their well-being.”

Federal judges have the discretion to grant jurors anonymity and use this option when deemed appropriate for federal trials. However, current state law only permits New York courts to preclude disclosure of jurors' residential and business addresses when facing the potential for juror intimidation or harm. This bill would expand existing provisions by allowing the names of jurors to be withheld as a precautionary measure.

The bill has been sent to the Assembly.

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