



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Terrence Murphy

Murphy passes package of bills to toughen penalties for sex offenders

Terrence P. Murphy

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ALBANY, NY - State Senator Terrence Murphy, long known for his work in local government on Child Safety Zone initiatives, today announced the passage of a package of legislation he says would help keep communities safer from sexual predators. The seven bills are aimed at helping to prevent the most dangerous offenders from having contact with children and college students, require more stringent residency reporting requirements for the sex offender registry, strengthen penalties for those who help sex offenders evade registration requirements, and create a public awareness program to educate schools, community groups, and clergy on issues related to sex offenders.

"I have said many times we must take all measures to improve the future of our kids here in Westchester and the Hudson Valley and today we have achieved that," Senator Murphy said. "We need to make our communities more affordable but we also need to make them safer. It's a quality of life issue and I intend to continue working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to put the necessary measures in place that protect our children from deviant sexual predators."

Murphy is a founder and past President of Keeping Westchester Safe, an organization that worked with the State Assembly Sex Offender Watch Task Force, upon which he also sat, to craft legislation and uniform standards on similar issues relating to sex offenders and victims' rights. The package of bills which Murphy voted to pass today includes:

- Senate bill S851, legislation that would prohibit Level 2 and 3 sex offenders from being placed in temporary and emergency housing or homeless shelters where children are present.
- Senate bill S869, which would make it a crime for anyone to knowingly harbor, house, or employ a sex offender who has failed to register or verify residence or employment and fails to contact their local law enforcement agency.
- Senate bill S2084, a measure which would prohibit a sexually violent or Level 3 sex offender who committed a crime against a child from being granted custody and unsupervised visitation with a child.
- Senate bill S1608, which would require reporting of multiple residences when a sex offender is living somewhere part-time. Under current law, offenders are only required to register their primary residence.
- Senate bill S396, legislation which requires the commissioner of the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities to contact local officials and school superintendents when a sex offender is transferred to a community program or residence within their municipality.
- Senate bill S833, which would prohibit Level 3 sex offenders from living in student housing on college campuses and makes it a class A misdemeanor upon conviction of a first offense, and a class D felony upon conviction for a second or subsequent offense.
- Senate bill S845, which establishes a sex offender public awareness outreach program. This program would provide educational outreach to schools, community groups, and clergy on issues related to sex offenders.

Murphy's Keeping Westchester Safe organization held public forums with law enforcement experts, victim's advocates, social workers and local elected officials in Chappaqua in 2011 and 2010, and Yorktown in 2011, 2010, 2009, and 2008. A prime focus was on creating Child Safety Zone laws that prohibit sex offenders from residing within a certain range of facilities designed to attract children, or their victim's residence.

"My wife and I founded the Keeping Westchester Safe for my children," Senator Murphy said. "Their safety and well-being are my highest priorities. As we head into National Crime Victims' Rights Week in April, which falls during Sexual Assault Awareness Month, I will be working to craft more sensible legislation on these issues and hope to see some of the goals we have been working on for a long time enacted into law."

The bills will be sent to the Assembly where they will await passage.