Senate Passes Nine Bills to Close Loopholes in Sex Offender Laws

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Ortt: Legislation Will Help Keep Children and Communities Safe

The New York State Senate today passed a total of nine bills that would close dangerous loopholes in sex offender laws. Legislation would better protect children and create safer communities. Not only would the measures address safety concerns, but would also address issues raised by a recent state Court of Appeals ruling that does not give local governments the authority to restrict where sex offenders can live.

State Senator Robert Ortt (R,C,I-North Tonawanda) sponsored a bill (S2981) that fixes a loophole allowing sex offenders to spend significant amounts of time at a residence other than the primary one registered with the state. This legislation clarifies the definition of residency and requires offenders to comply with registration requirements to include any location at which the offender spends more than two days a week.

"Keeping our communities safe is a key priority for me and for my Senate Republican colleagues," said Sen. Ortt. "Shockingly, sex offenders have been able to skirt residency laws and essentially live within school zones, or next to the victims of their crimes. This legislation will close loopholes in current law and ultimately protect our children and communities."

The legislation passed today would: provide municipalities with the ability to enact local laws that strengthen sex offender restrictions; close loopholes that allow sex offenders to reside close to pre-K and kindergarten programs; prevent sex offenders from living close to elementary or high schools; decrease the potential time a sex offender could be released into the community before risk levels are determined; increase public disclosure about the residencies and workplaces of sex offenders; and prohibit registered sex offenders from living close to their victims, or from entering child care facilities.

The bills have been sent to the Assembly.