



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie: Legislation to Close Glaring Loophole in Child Kidnapping Investigations Passes Senate

PATTY RITCHIE March 17, 2015

| ISSUE: **CRIME**

Law Would Give Authorities Immediate Access to Child Protective Records

State Senator Patty Ritchie has announced legislation she cosponsors that would give law enforcement immediate access to child protective records in the event of a kidnapping has passed the Senate. Under current state law, authorities are often stalled in their investigations when trying to obtain records from child protective services.

The measure (S.3520-A) was sparked by a recent case in the Albany region, where 5 year-old Kenneth White was reported missing and later found dead. While investigating the case, authorities were stopped from accessing Kenneth's child protective records, which could have provided them with additional persons of interest. A cousin was later arrested and charged with the crime.

"When a child goes missing, it goes without saying that time is of the essence," said Senator Ritchie.

"Often times, law enforcement are required to jump through hoops in order to gain access to the information they need to bring children quickly to safety. This legislation closes a glaring loophole when it comes to safeguarding our kids by providing law enforcement with necessary information in a timely manner and also will help to prevent future tragedies by providing an additional level of protection for children across the state who might come into harm's way."

Through the legislation, which is sponsored by Albany-area Senator George Amedore, the determination for when child protective services should turn over records to local law enforcement agencies during an investigation is clarified.

According to the most recent available statistics available from a study by the U.S. Department of Justice, 797,500 children younger than 18 were reported missing in a one-year period of time, resulting in an average of 2,185 children being reported missing each day.

The bill was sent to the Assembly, where it is sponsored by Assemblymember Patricia Fahey.