



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## State Senator Jeff Klein passes “Ildefonso Romero Jr.’s Law” creating new felony charge for aggravated assault leading to serious injury or death

JEFFREY D. KLEIN June 1, 2015

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*Romero’s family pushes for bill to become law to bring justice to other families*

**Albany, NY — State Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester)** today passed “Ildefonso Romero, Jr.’s Law” which creates a felony charge for aggravated assault that results in serious injury or death.

The passage of the bill comes nearly a year after the tragic death of Ildefonso Romero, Jr. who was killed as he attempted to break up a fight in front of his Bronx home. The 59-year-old Good Samaritan tried to shield a young woman in danger when a 17-year-old man fatally punched him in the head. The perpetrator received five-months imprisonment for the deadly blow because the court could only charge him with a misdemeanor, leaving his family devastated.

“Ildefonso Romero, Jr. tried to help a teenage girl under attack and with one-punch his life was senselessly taken from us. Today, we send a message in Ildefonso Romero, Jr.’s name that when a perpetrator uses his fist as a weapon to cause serious injury or death there will be a serious price to pay. No family should ever go through the grief of losing a loved one and

then watch his killer get a slap on the wrist. This legislation finally closes a glaring loophole in the penal code,” **said Senator Klein.**

Also known as “one-punch” legislation, “Ildefonso Romero, Jr.’s Law,” arms prosecutors with a tool to charge and convict perpetrators who use their fists as deadly weapons. It creates a new class E felony offense that carries a maximum prison term of four years.

Police reports indicate that “one-punch” crimes are on the rise and videos illustrating “one-punch” or sucker punch techniques are proliferating online.

“While we as lawmakers cannot change the outcome of the case of the man who took Ildefonso Romero Jr.’s life, the passing of this bill today in the Senate will ensure that Mr. Romero is remembered long after his unfortunate death,” **said Assemblyman Luis R. Sepulveda (D-Bronx)**, who sponsors companion legislation in the Assembly. “The passing of this bill comes under regrettable circumstances, but we will work to eliminate the possibility that crimes such as these may be met with insufficient consequences. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Assembly to see this bill pass there as well.”

“I wholeheartedly support Senator Klein and Assemblyman Sepulveda in calling for passage of ‘Ildefonso Romero Jr.’s Law.’ Every day, we see criminal acts of assaults that claim the lives of innocent New Yorkers, and in the case of Mr. Romero, a heroic New Yorker, who in an effort to save the life of a teen under threat, was murdered by a vicious sucker punch. Worse still, is that while this great citizen was lost to his friends and family forever, the person responsible was charged only with a misdemeanor. This unconscionable circumstance must never happen again, passing this bill corrects this injustice,” **said Assemblyman Marcos Crespo (D-Bronx).**

“I congratulate Senator Jeff Klein for moving this needed piece of legislation in New York State. It is about time that people are held responsible for their actions,” **said Senator Rev.**

**Ruben Diaz (D-Bronx).**

Ildefonso Romero, Jr., who worked at Lincoln Hospital, was a father of five and just about to celebrate his 34th wedding anniversary. His family had also been planning a surprise 60th birthday party for him on the day he intervened in the fatal June 21, 2014 fight. They were heartbroken.

“My family and I are extremely grateful for the continuous support from Senator Klein, Assemblyman Sepulveda, the Senators and all the Assembly Members. We are so happy that we have reached the passage of the bill in the Senate. We are hoping that with the passage of this bill in my father’s name that there will be justice for families and no one will go through what our family has endured. It has been extremely difficult for my family especially as the one year anniversary of his death approaches. There will be nothing that will bring my father back, but a bill being passed in his name will at least bring some peace to our hearts. We want to make a difference in the lives of others. That is what my dad would of wanted,” **said the victim’s daughter, Jennifer Perez.**