



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

Senate Passes Legislation to Combat Sexual Violence on College Campuses

John J. Bonacic

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- [Education](#)



(Albany, NY)- Senator Bonacic is pleased to announce that legislation he supported has passed the Senate that will help combat sexual violence on college campuses. The bill, S.5965, would require all colleges and universities in the State of New York to implement uniform prevention and response policies and procedures relating to sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

Specifically, S.5965 includes:

A statewide definition of affirmative consent, defining consent as a knowing, voluntary, and mutual decision among all participants to engage in sexual activity;

A statewide amnesty policy, to ensure that students reporting incidents of sexual assault or other sexual violence are granted immunity for certain campus policy violations, such as drug and alcohol use;

A Students' Bill of Rights, which campuses will be required to distribute to all students in order to specifically inform sexual violence victims of their legal rights and how they may access appropriate resources;

Comprehensive training requirements for administrators, staff, and students, including at new student orientations;

Reporting requirements for campuses to annually submit aggregate data on reported incidents of sexual violence and their adjudication and handling to the State Education Department;

A new unit within the State Police called the "sexual assault victims unit" specialized in advanced training in responding to sexual assaults and related crimes that shall also provide assistance to campus police or local law enforcement, as well as training to college campus communities;

A commitment of \$10 million to help combat campus sexual assault through various partners, split in the following manner: \$4.5 million to rape crisis centers to provide services and resources to students, \$4.5 million to the State Police to create sexual assault victims unit, and \$1 million to colleges and universities; and

A requirement for first responders to notify survivors of their right to contact outside law enforcement.

“With this legislation, my colleagues and I have developed a comprehensive approach designed to make every college and university campus throughout New York State as safe and secure as possible,” said Senator Bonacic “I remain committed to supporting initiatives that further strengthen the safety of our college campuses.”

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