



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

RITCHIE: MEASURE TO CLOSE LOOPHOLE IN CHILD KIDNAPPING INVESTIGATIONS SIGNED INTO LAW

PATTY RITCHIE November 23, 2015

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A measure cosponsored by State Senator Patty Ritchie that gives law enforcement officials immediate access to abuse and neglect records when children are reported missing has been signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

The measure (S.3520-A) was sparked by a case that happened last December 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 information on additional persons of interest. Instead, their search time was delayed before Kenneth was discovered and his cousin later confessed to attacking him.

"As a mother and grandmother, I know there's nothing more important than making sure children are protected from those who wish to harm them," said Senator Ritchie.

"When a child goes missing, every second counts. However, as we've seen, law enforcement officials are sometimes unnecessarily delayed as they try to obtain the details needed to investigate these cases. Through this new law, those investigating will more easily be able to access the vital information they need to bring missing children home, and to safety."

Through the new law, 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.