



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Roxanne J. Persaud

STOP, LOOK & GO!

ROXANNE J. PERSAUD July 18, 2016

| ISSUE: **POKEMON GO, VIRTUAL REALITY, HEALTH AND SAFETY**



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BROOKLYN – Nintendo, The Pokémon Company and Google-spinoff Niantic, Inc. recently released the newest game in the wildly popular Pokémon franchise, Pokémon GO, and this

release went straight to smart phones. Users of Android and iOS phones are introduced not to a fantasy world but a GPS map of their surroundings, with certain landmarks, institutions and notable features of locations serving as “pokéstops” for people to pick up items and scour for Pokémon.

However, many if not most major newspapers and periodicals have raised a variety of safety concerns, from users forgetting the real world is around them to vulnerabilities of the game to data theft. Senator Roxanne Persaud (SD-19), in an effort to raise awareness of these issues, sent a letter to the game developer, Niantic, Inc., and asked the company to institute more and smarter warnings.

“I’m excited that people, especially children will get to learn more about the world around them. However, the application needs a warning or a reminder to make sure kids and other users not too distracted to remember the world around them,” said Senator Persaud. “It’s great to see that features of our neighborhoods are interactive parts of the game and give people some insight into their surroundings. But there’s got to be something that helps snap people back to reality from time to time, and hopefully help prevent injuries and accidents.”

Senator Persaud especially urges parents of children to talk to their children who use the application and caution them to:

- Be alert at all times
- Stay aware of your surroundings
- Play in pairs or as a group to ensure safety
- Not to play when those children are engaged in other activities such as driving, riding a bike, or walking fast
- Be respectful of sacred and private property and rules of an establishment

- Remind of the concern of "stranger-danger"

And for all persons, of any age, who use the application, Senator Persaud cautions that users have to be aware that third party applications can retrieve sensitive data from your phone.

The full text of Senator Persaud's letter to Niantic, Inc. can be found below:

Senator Persaud's Pokemon GO Letter

Background

Roxanne Jacqueline Persaud was elected to the State Senate in November 2015 after serving in the State Assembly.

Roxanne spent many years as a Higher Education Administrator prior to being elected to the State Legislature. In addition, she is a longtime advocate for the community. She served as President of the 69th Precinct Community Council in Canarsie, a member of Community Board 18 and Commissioner on the New York City Districting Commission. She also is a graduate of the NYPD Citizens Police Academy as well as, the New York City Office of Emergency Management-Community Emergency Response Team. Additionally, she was a member of Community Action Board of the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development and Chairperson of the Neighborhood Advisory Board - District 18. She also serves on organizations highlighting domestic violence and cancer awareness among others.

BBC News, <http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-36796296>, July 14, 2016; CBS News, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-dark-side-of-pokemon-go/>, July 13, 2016; Polygon, <http://www.polygon.com/2016/7/11/12151442/pokemon-go-security-risk-data-information-ios-android>, July 11, 2016.

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