



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Diane J. Savino

Pokémon NO! Disturbing investigation finds pokémon popping up at high-level sex offenders' residences across the city

DIANE J. SAVINO July 29, 2016



New York, NY — Senators Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) and Diane Savino (SI/Brooklyn) on Friday released an alarming investigative report, “Protecting Our Children: How Pokémon GO and Augmented Reality Games Expose Children to Sex Offenders.”

The wildly popular game, downloaded over 30 million times within the first two weeks of its release, takes players on a hunt for pokémon using real-life maps and locations. Gamers must pause at Pokéstops, located throughout the city, to collect items necessary to play the game and at Gyms where they meet up with other players in real-life to battle their collection of creatures.

The investigation found:

Pokémon materialized in front of Level 2 or 3 sex offenders' homes 57% of the time.

Pokéstops or Gyms were located within a half-block of convicted pedophiles' residences 59% of the time.

A Pokémon-related item appeared near a high-level sex offenders' residences 73% of the time.

"While children believe they are out to catch a pokémon, what might really be lurking could be a predator instead of a Pikachu. We want our children to have safe fun, but it makes no sense at all to give dangerous sexual predators a virtual road map to where our children congregate. We must update our law that already prohibits high level predators from using

social media and we must make sure that gamers scrub these addresses from this game and future ones,” said Senator Klein.

“It’s dangerous to let our children linger in front of a sex offender’s home to play a game, and it’s absurd that a high-level predator should be allowed to have this map at his or her fingertips in the first place. We devised simple solutions in light of this alarming investigation to keep our laws up-to-date as technology advances,” said Senator Savino.

In light of the alarming findings, Senator Klein will introduce legislation to prohibit certain Level 2 and 3 sex offenders from playing augmented reality games. Many high-level sex offenders are already prohibited from using social media.

In another piece of legislation, Senator Klein will require game developers to regularly scour the Department of Criminal Justice website to obtain sex offender addresses and remove all in-game objectives within 100-feet of their residencies.

The investigation focused on 100 Level 2 and 3 sex offenders who committed crimes against children or who were convicted of possessing child pornography. All of the individuals are still on parole or probation and are prohibited from living within 1,000 feet of a school.

In each borough, a total of 57 pokemon were caught directly in front of these high-level pedophiles' homes.

Worse, Pokéstops and Gyms populated surrounding areas a majority of the time.

Pokéstops are essential to playing, since players pick up items needed for the game. They are stationed at historical sites, businesses or on local artworks. "Lures" can be placed on them to attract pokémon, opening up another avenue of danger for children. A sexual predator can easily earn a lure module by playing the game or can purchase them with real world money.

Gyms prompt real world encounters. They are places where players must physically congregate to battle their pokémon, again leaving children vulnerable to predators who have access to a map of these sites, many of whom live very closeby.

Of 100 high-level sex offenders examined in this investigation, 59% of the time the predator lived within a half-block of a Pokéstop and/or Gym.

Please read our report attached.