



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## SERINO AND GALEF SEEK TO ENSURE SCHOOLS HAVE NECESSARY TOOLS TO BETTER PROTECT STUDENTS FROM SEX OFFENDERS

SUSAN SERINO June 8, 2017

| ISSUE: **CHILD PROTECTION**

ALBANY, NY—Recently, local news reports have detailed the disturbing story of a school employee who was allowed to continue to work at an elementary school for almost a year after being arrested for raping a minor. As a result, Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park) and Assemblywoman Sandy Galef (D, WF, I, WEP – Ossining) introduced a bill that would prevent such a situation from happening again in the state by ensuring that schools receive immediate notification if any of their employees are arrested for sex offenses.

“The thought of vulnerable, elementary school children being exposed to a sexual predator in their school—a place that should be considered a safe haven for our children—is maddening,” said Senator Sue Serino. “We have a responsibility to ensure that our law works to prevent these types of situations and to ensure that our schools, and our law enforcement agencies, have the tools they need to better protect our children from being exposed to these dangerous individuals. That’s what this bill does.”

“We must do all we can by law to protect our children from sexual abuse. It is appalling that a person can be arrested today in New York State as a sexual predator, and no notification occurs when that individual is employed in a school district or works with children. The Ossining School District was not notified of the arrest or conviction, which could have jeopardized the lives of our school children. This bill will assure that this troubling situation never occurs again in our state,” said Assemblywoman Sandy Galef.

Recently, reports surfaced that a custodian working in the Ossining School District—a local public school district—was convicted on May 1, 2017 of two misdemeanors and two felonies, including the third-degree rape of a victim under 17. Although the employee was arrested for the crime over a year ago, he continued to work in the school throughout the course of the legal process where he had regular contact with minors. The school in which the perpetrator was employed was not made aware of the issue until it received an anonymous tip.

Under current law, prosecutors are only required to alert a school district upon conviction.

This bill (S. 6597) would strengthen the law to ensure that law enforcement has the statutory authority it needs to promptly alert school superintendents or administrators of the arrests involving sex offenses, empowering schools to take the steps necessary to ensure that the individual in question does not have contact with its students.