



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

Sex offenders endanger city's homeless children, new report reveals

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Independent Democratic Conference finds highest number of Level 2 & 3 sex offenders living in city family shelters in years, calls for immediate action

New York, NY— Senator Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester), Senator Marisol Alcantara (D-Manhattan), and Senator Jose Peralta (D-Queens) on Thursday released, “Unsafe Shelters,” an investigative report detailing the rise in Level 2 and 3 sex offenders living among the city’s nearly 23,000 homeless children in family shelters.

Currently 21 high level sex offenders share the same facilities as vulnerable homeless children, a practice the city's Department of Homeless Services publicly vowed to end. But the practice not only continues, the investigation found, it is on the rise.

"We must protect our most vulnerable children from high level sex offenders who easily could be housed elsewhere. These sexual predators know how to take advantage of children and they should not be allowed to reside in family homeless shelters, where people are looking to regain stability. This is a disaster waiting to happen and the city needs to immediately move these predators away from these children. I am also calling on the Assembly to finally pass legislation that will ban Level 2 and 3 sex offenders from sheltering with families," **said Senator Klein.**

"Families entering the New York City shelter system are already entering a difficult situation for their families and a difficult period in their lives. Having to worry about sex offenders preying on their children is an unacceptable burden on our city's homeless families, and an unacceptable danger to our children, who are our future. We cannot allow this state of affairs to continue, and I applaud Senator Klein and the Independent Democratic Conference for bringing attention to this issue," **said Senator Alcantara.**

"The safety of our families and children is sacred, and this is why we must ensure we prioritize their well-being. We cannot afford any loophole, any misinterpretation when it comes to protecting some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers. I urge the state Legislature to pass a measure that will prohibit the placement of Level 2 or Level 3 sex offenders in family homeless shelters. I want to thank Senator Klein for his continuous efforts to tackle these avoidable and dangerous situations," **said Senator Peralta.**

The number of sexual predators living in family shelters spiked since 2007 when Senator Klein first began looking into the issue.

There are 21 Level 2 and 3 sex offenders living in family shelters this year. The highest concentration of offenders live in Bronx shelters.

In 2015, Senator Klein learned that the Crystal Family residence in The Bronx housed two sexual predators who were eventually removed after he notified the city. Senator Klein worked with the city on this issue, and DHS publicly stated that no sexual predators would be housed with homeless families in February 2015.

Months later, DHS developed its own internal policy to screen sexual offenders and use discretion before placing them in family shelters. Factors that DHS would consider according to this procedure are the severity of the crime committed, the age and gender of the victim as well as their relationship to the offender, how long ago the crime was committed, whether that individual faced any existing residency restrictions, their age, and whether the offender happens to be the single custodial parent.

Families in shelters feel unsafe when they learn a sexual predator lives in the same residence. Senator Klein introduced legislation, S. 1784, which would prohibit Level 2 and 3 sex offenders from residing in family homeless shelters to protect the city's most vulnerable children from potential abuse.

It has passed the Senate numerous times, but the Assembly will not take it up.