



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

Assemblywoman Galef, Senator Serino, and Ossining Officials Promote Bill to Help Schools Protect Students from Sex Offenders

SUSAN SERINO October 4, 2017

| ISSUE: **CHILD SAFETY**



OSSINING (October 3, 2017) – Assemblywoman Sandy Galef was joined today by Ossining School District Superintendent Dr. Raymond Sanchez, Ossining Police Chief Kevin Sylvester and concerned Ossining PTA parents to promote legislation sponsored by herself and Senator Sue Serino, (A.8382/S.6597), that would protect children from possible dangerous sex offenders working in their schools by ensuring that schools are immediately notified if any of their employees are arrested for sex offenses.

Earlier this year, a longtime Ossining school custodian was convicted of two misdemeanors and two felonies, including the third-degree rape of a victim under the age of 17, taking many in the community by surprise. During the course of the criminal case against him, the employee continued to work in the school, in direct contact with students, as the superintendent's office was only made aware of the situation through an anonymous handwritten letter after a guilty verdict was found. Because of a loophole in current state law that does not require schools to be provided with arrest notifications of employees hired before 2001, the Ossining school district had no idea of the sex offense charge against the employee.

Galef's bill, sponsored with Senator Sue Serino, would amend the Education Law by requiring local law enforcement to immediately notify school superintendents of any employee's arrest for a sex crime, regardless of the year they were hired.

"Schools should be a safe place for all students, and the adults that young people come in contact with should be trustworthy and should never be a threat to the safety and security of the children and their studies," said **Assemblywoman Sandy Galef**. "This bill will help schools to protect their students and ensure that this troubling situation never happens again."

"The safety of our children should always be our highest priority," said **Senator Sue Serino**. "The situation that occurred in Ossining demonstrates a clear vulnerability in our system and we have a duty to fix the problem and ensure that our law actively works to protect our children against potential predators. This bill is about making sure our schools and law enforcement have the tools they need keep our children from being exposed to dangerous individuals, and I urge both houses to work towards its passage in the coming Legislative Session."

"Safety and security in the Ossining School District is one of our top priorities. Through this bill, we will ensure school districts have the information they need to protect all staff and students," said **Ossining Schools Superintendent Raymond Sanchez**.

Stacy Levine, a representative from the Ossining Schools Parent Teacher Association, said, "if we don't get this legislation passed, who's to say that the next time this happens, won't be to one of our children in school. Nobody should be withholding information from our district that could ever put a child at risk regardless of when they started working here."

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