



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Chris Jacobs

## Jacobs Sponsors New Laws in Light of Nichols' School Tragedies

SENATOR JACOBS January 9, 2018

| ISSUE: **CHILD ABUSE, CHILD MOLESTATION, CHILD PROTECTION**

(Albany, NY) — In light of the recent sexual abuse revelations at The Nichols School in Buffalo, New York State Senator Chris Jacobs has co-sponsored two proposed laws that would provide greater protections of children in both public and private schools.

The first law Jacobs is co-sponsoring (S4342) would eliminate the so called “private school loophole,” which would require private school teachers and administrators to have the same legal responsibility as public schools to report allegations of child abuse.

The recent Nichols Report revealed several incidents of sexual relations between teachers and students at the school years ago and former students interviewed claimed that teachers and administrators were aware of the inappropriate relationships but took no action to report it to the authorities.

Under current law, private school teachers and administrators are not obligated to report allegations of abuse. “I have no idea why private schools were excluded from the original reporter law when it was passed years ago, but it needs to change and change immediately,” said Jacobs.

The second piece of legislation (S2582) would make it a criminal offense for a teacher to have a sexual relationship with a student under the age of 21. In current law, teacher/student

sexual relationships are not illegal if the student is over 17. Many instances have occurred around the state where teachers cultivate a relationship and then turn into a sexual one as soon as the student turns 17 years old.

The Nichols School incident highlighted one such relationship between a 17-year old student and a 48- year old teacher, not illegal under current state law.

"Children need to be protected from teachers and others in positions of power in our schools who may manipulate them into engaging in sexual activities, even if they are at the age of consent," said Jacobs. The legislation also defines school employee to mean any person defined as an employee or volunteer for that school, "basically any adult at the school with direct student contact, in a position of trust," said Jacobs.

"We need to protect our children while in school, no matter the age, no matter public or private, and we need to make it law that the adults charged with caring for our children must report allegations of abuse to the proper authorities," said Jacobs.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2017-S4342**

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- Introduced
  
  - - In Committee Assembly
    - In Committee Senate

- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate

- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Requires school administrators in private schools to report allegations of child abuse in an educational setting

February 10, 2017

In Senate Committee [Rules](#)

Sponsored by [John E. Brooks](#)

Do you support this bill?