



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

Senator Bonacic Supports a Package of Bills to Protect New York's First Responders

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(Albany, NY)- State Senator John J. Bonacic (R/C/I-Mt. Hope) voted in favor of a package of bills today aimed at protecting New York's first responders. The legislation would increase protections for the state's law enforcement community, firefighters, and other emergency service workers, including the "Community Heroes Protection Act."

The measures are in direct response to the numerous incidents of violence directed at New York's first responders and would increase penalties for assaults or threats to police, increase safety at correctional facilities, and increase benefits for those who became sick from their heroic service during the World Trade Center recovery.

The "Community Heroes Protection Act" was inspired by those who have lost their lives, were wounded, or targeted specifically because of their profession as community protectors, such as last year's fatal shooting of NYPD Officer Miosotis Familia. The bill (S1114A), which Senator Bonacic co-sponsors, would make certain crimes explicitly committed against law enforcement, firefighters, and first responders punishable as hate crimes.

"Our first responders are our protectors, keeping us safe from harm, and they need to know that their government has their back," said Senator Bonacic. "I'm pleased to support these bills because I know they will increase much-needed protections for these brave men and women."

In addition to the "Community Heroes Protection Act", the other pieces of legislation passed today includes:

- S1747, helps protect retired police officers from retaliation by individuals who had been arrested by the officers when they were still on active duty;
- S1984, strengthens existing penalties by creating a new crime when a terrorist threat is made against a police officer;
- S2125, prohibits civilian drone use within 1,000 feet of a correctional facility;
- S5337, expands the permitted use of TSA body image scanner devices in correctional facilities across the state as part of an effort to reduce a high level of inmate "slashing" violence through the use of smuggled blades;
- S6898B, expands line of duty sick leave to include every public officer or employee who, on the job, engaged in World Trade Center rescue, recovery, or cleanup activities; and

- S1302 increases penalties for criminals who target law enforcement through vehicle vandalism. As a result of serving and protecting communities all across the state, law enforcement personnel are placed in dangerous situations on a daily basis.

In addition to the bills taken up today, the Senate Republican conference has been a consistent advocate for the law enforcement community throughout the state. In last year's budget the Senate secured \$4 million to help retrofit NYPD patrol cars and command vehicles with bulletproof windows and door panels to help save the lives of law enforcement.