



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Griffo: Assembly, Governor should step up and give schools the security resources they need

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As students head back to school and following the Governor's announcement Tuesday that state police will be stepping up patrols to watch for dangerous drivers as children return to class, state Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, expressed his displeasure today that a package of school safety bills passed by the Senate earlier this year was not supported by the state Assembly and Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

Included in that package of legislation was a bill (S7846) that would speed up the approval process for security and other improvements at school districts across the state. The Smart Schools Review Board, which approves the plans, has met infrequently since its first meeting in May of 2016. Even after a project is approved, it can take a long time for districts to receive the money to begin or pay off the project.

There were more than 200 pending applications earlier this year. School districts have complained that it is difficult to get a response from the state Education Department as to the status of their plans and are still in need of this important funding.

Other bills would have increased the ability of schools to hire qualified security personnel; created new state funding mechanisms for infrastructure investments that improve school

safety; increased access to school-based mental health services; expanded state actions and intelligence coordination to protect schools against attack; and strengthened penalties for crimes on school grounds.

The legislation was referred to a variety of committees in the state Assembly.

“In March, the state Senate passed a comprehensive package of legislation containing critical safety measures that would enhance security in schools throughout the state,” Sen. Griffo said. “With this legislation, we had a chance to improve the security of our schools. However, the state Assembly was slow to act on this legislation, placing the bills in committees where they may not see the light of day. Now with school starting back up, it is time for the Assembly majority and the Governor to step up, show some real leadership and provide our schools with the tools and resources they need to keep students, teachers and staff safe.”