



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Sen. Griffo participates in public hearing examining New York State's parole policies

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October 1, 2018

ALBANY – As member of the New York State Senate's Standing Committee on Crime Victims, Crime and Correction, state Sen. Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, joined with members of the Senate's Standing Committee on Elections for a public hearing today in Albany that examined the state's current parole policies and the Governor's Executive Order allowing conditional pardons that enable parolees to vote.

Today's hearing and a second one that will be held Tuesday on Long Island stem from concerns raised following the recent parole board release of Herman Bell and other convicted cop killers and the Governor's Executive Order.

Those invited to take part in today's hearing included officials from the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, Board of Parole, Board of Elections; representatives from law enforcement, schools, victims' rights advocates, prison rights organizations; and other community advocates.

“These hearings are intended to allow us to examine the statutory procedures and compliance that Parole Board members are required to consider when rendering decisions to deny or grant parole to an inmate,” Sen. Griffo said. “Through these hearings, we are given the opportunity to hear from and to question experts and others on important topics and issues that affect all New Yorkers.”

In April, the Governor signed an Executive Order that ordered the Commissioner of the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision to submit records of parolees to the Governor’s office so that a determination could be made as to the granting of a conditional pardon to restore their voting rights.

Sen. Griffo said that this Executive Order was an effort by the Governor to try to attract more votes.

“While today’s hearing provided valuable information and insight, I remain concerned with the Governor’s Executive Order allowing convicted felons, post-release, to vote,” Sen. Griffo said. “Currently, an individual can vote after a felony conviction while on probation or once they have completed parole. As I have said in the past, the Governor’s plan smells of good politics over good policy as the administration has failed to inform communities who the Governor has pardoned and what crimes they have committed. We owe it to the people of the state of New York to ensure that policies affecting their lives are done in a thoughtful and appropriate way.”