



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Senator James Sanders Jr. to Fight for Better Signage and Water Safety Education Following Recent Drowning Deaths at Rockaway Beach

JAMES SANDERS JR. August 5, 2019



State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway) will be meeting with the appropriate government agencies in the coming days to discuss solutions to prevent future drowning deaths at Rockaway Beach. There have been three such deaths and one person missing and presumed dead within the last month. All of the victims entered the water after 6 p.m. when lifeguards are not on duty.

“How many people have to die, before we say enough is enough?” Sanders asked. “Rockaway Beach is beautiful, but it can also be dangerous.”

Sanders is advocating for increased and improved signage all around Rockaway Beach, particularly in areas where the ocean floor dips several feet, the launch of an educational campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of rip tides, whirlpools and other conditions that can cause drowning, increased access to supervised public pools and swimming lessons.

“I am deeply and profoundly saddened by the drowning deaths that have occurred in Far Rockaway over the last month and my thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families,” Sanders said. “I want to make sure that no other family has to experience such heartbreaking loss.”

Just this past Sunday, Joshua Odozi, Jr., 15, was swept out to sea by strong waves as a friend and other onlookers tried to pull him to safety. Divers are still searching for the youth, but he is presumed to have drowned.

Another victim, John Munoz, 18, was swept away by strong tides and his lifeless body was discovered on July 31, 2019 not far from where he was last seen struggling to stay afloat near Beach 60<sup>th</sup> Street. He had been swimming with a friend at 8:30 p.m. the previous day.

Umarie Chamble and Keylon Ramsay, a Long Island couple, were celebrating a friend’s birthday on July 9, 2019, when the apparently drowned near Beach 9th St. and Seagirt Blvd. sometime after they started swimming at about 10:20 p.m.

“If we can learn one thing from these recent tragedies and all of the previous swimming-related deaths at Rockway Beach it is that safety must come first,” Sanders said. “Having

some summer fun is not worth risking your life. I want people to enjoy the beach, but do so during the day and always when a lifeguard is present."