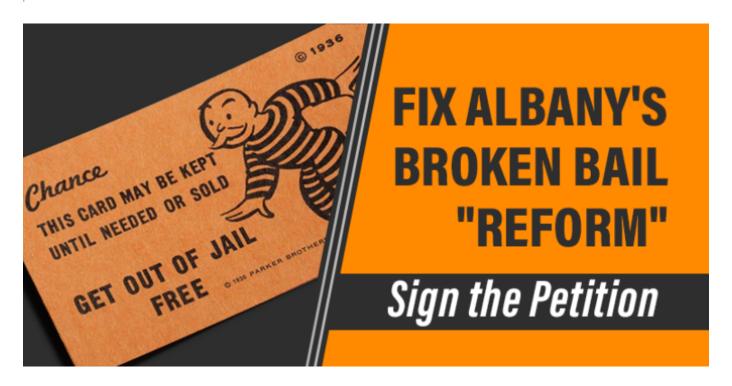# Sign the Petition to Fix Albany's Broken Bail Laws: Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

SENATOR PATTY RITCHIE   January 17, 2020

| ISSUE: **BAIL REFORM. PUBLIC SAFETY**

Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

Imagine for a second your child is killed by a drunk driver. Then, imagine you find out the person responsible is a repeat offender who was arrested and released a couple weeks prior, after not having a court-ordered ignition interlock device in his vehicle. This sounds like a nightmare, but unfortunately, for New Yorkers, it is real life.

It has been less than a month since bail "reforms"—championed by downstate-led, far-left Democrats in both houses of the State Legislature—went into effect, resulting in the release of hundreds of accused criminals from jail without paying bail. Many of these individuals have been charged with committing serious crimes, including manslaughter, stalking, sex trafficking, child assault and domestic violence. Some are repeat offenders, who present very serious dangers to the public. If you are finding this hard to believe, here are some real-life examples of those who are being released, thanks to bail reform:

- An Albany man charged with killing a woman by choking and stabbing her;
- An Ontario County man who allegedly distributed nude pictures of a girl between the ages of 10 and 12 years old;
- An unlicensed, illegal immigrant driver in Rockland County who is accused of striking and killing a mother of three in a Christmas Eve hit-and-run;
- A Peekskill man arrested for breaking-and-entering into a teenage girl's room, who was arrested again minutes after his release for breaking a door at police headquarters;
- A New York City man arrested upstate after allegedly being caught with a kilo of cocaine mixed with fentanyl;
- A man in Hoosick Falls arrested, accused of using an axe to smash a female victim's car;
- An Albany county man facing manslaughter and assault charges after a 6 week-old infant died in his care due to ingesting meth;
- A man who is charged with pushing a baby's carriage into a busy road in an attempted robbery, a man who police say took part in a shooting that wounded a 3 year-old in a day-care center, and an accused sexual predator, all in Albany County; and

- A man in Rochester convicted of shooting a police officer in 2009, arrested again, charged with new drug charges.

Unfortunately, this list goes on and on. Simply put, these reforms go too far—and I am not the only one who feels that way. Across our state, those on the front lines of protecting our safety, including law enforcement officials, attorneys and judges—none of whom were consulted before these radical reforms were enacted—are speaking out about the dangerous impact they are already having. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are calling for the rollback of these reforms too, as are people in every corner of the state, many of whom are waking up every morning to headlines about potentially dangerous individuals being released back into their communities.

Just recently, my colleagues and I in the Senate minority brought an amendment to the Senate floor that would repeal this new bail law. Unfortunately, the Democratic majority shot it down, signaling to people across our state that their safety just is not a priority. Fixing this disastrous bail law should have been our first order of business in the New Year, but instead, Democrats started the new legislative session by taking up a series of voting reform measures and completely ignoring the fact that the safety of our state has been put in jeopardy.

Rest assured that in the coming days of the Legislative Session, my colleagues and I will continue to advocate for the repeal of these bail reforms. I invite you to speak up too, by signing this petition, which calls on Albany to fix their broken bail laws and keep our communities safe. Enough is enough, and I hope you will join me in telling lawmakers that the safety of law-abiding citizens needs to come first.