NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Ritchie Introduces Bill to Prevent Teen Suicides, Improve Online Safety

[Patty Ritchie](#)

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In an effort to prevent teen suicides, State Senator Patty Ritchie has introduced legislation that would provide educators and their students with resources related to

suicide prevention, as well as important information regarding social media safety and cyberbullying.

The measure was prompted by the recent, tragic loss of two young St. Lawrence County residents, as well as other similar tragedies across the country that have demonstrated the need to raise awareness of teen suicide and threats to mental health that can exist online and on social media.

"My heart breaks for the St. Lawrence county teens who recently took their own lives, along with the loved ones they have left behind," said Senator Patty Ritchie.

"It is abundantly clear that more needs to be done to support teens who are struggling with mental health issues, as well as to teach them about the dangers that can lurk online and on social media. This bill is a good step toward raising awareness among educators about the risk of teen suicides and teaching students that help is always available."

Under the bill, S.6241, the New York State Office of Mental Health and the New York State Education Department would be required to identify or develop materials for educators regarding suicide prevention among school-aged children. These materials would include information regarding social media safety and preventing cyberbullying. In addition, the bill would also ensure secondary school students receive instruction regarding the prevention of suicide, social media safety and cyberbullying.

"Today's young people spend a great deal of time online and especially on apps where they interact with others—including people they know personally, as well as strangers," said Senator Patty Ritchie. "It is critical that teens understand the risks of online and social media activity. This bill would help ensure they are aware of the threats that exist and ultimately, would enable them to use the internet more safely."